

AUGUST 14, 1925

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FAME

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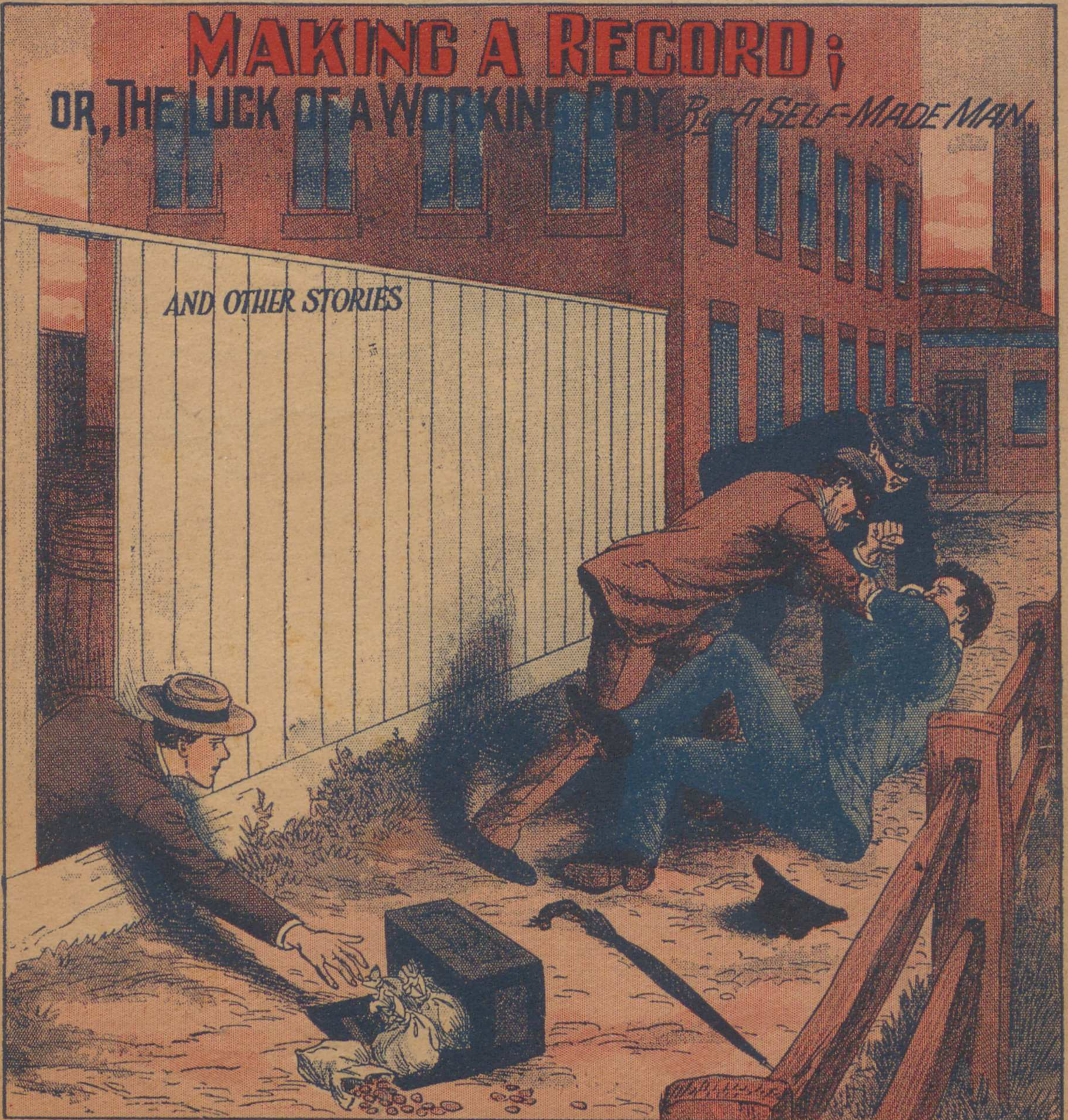
FORTUNE WEEKLY

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

MAKING A RECORD;

OR, THE LUCK OF A WORKING BOY *By A SELF-MADE MAN*

AND OTHER STORIES



Cautiously the boy thrust his head through the hole in the fence. He was astonished to see Craig on the ground struggling with two masked men. The cashbox lay close by. With a thrill of satisfaction Bob reached for it.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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NEW YORK, AUGUST 14, 1925

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MAKING A RECORD

OR, THE LUCK OF A WORKING BOY

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—In Which Bob Barron Is Up Against It.

"Bob Barron!"

Andrew Craig, cashier and managing clerk for David Waters, manufacturer of canned goods in the bustling Western town of Millgate, stood in the doorway of the shipping department and roared out the words in a furious tone of voice. He seemed to be angry clear through, for his black eyes snapped fire as he glared at the bright, good-looking boy who was stenciling a name and address on half a dozen cases that stood ready for the truckman to carry to the freight yard near by.

"Yes, sir," replied Bob, pausing in his work, brush in one hand and a stencil letter in the other, and looking up.

"This thing has got to be stopped, do you understand?" cried Craig, waving a telegraph blank in the air.

"What thing, sir?" asked the boy, in surprise.

"You've made another blunder."

"Another blunder!" ejaculated Bob, with a startled look.

"Yes; another blunder. You shipped a lot of canned corn to a customer who ordered deviled ham, and of course the man who ordered the corn has received the ham, so we may expect to hear from him at any moment."

"I don't see how that could have happened, sir. I am very particular in making the shipments," replied the boy, putting down the stencil and replacing the brush in the pot filled with a black liquid.

"Of course you don't see how it happened," sneered the managing clerk; "but it happened, just the same, and you are responsible for the blunder. I shall, of course, have to report this to Mr. Waters as soon as he gets back from Lakeview. We may lose two customers through your carelessness. As Mr. Waters had a whole lot of trouble trying to square himself with Meredith & Company over the blunder you made two weeks ago, I'm thinking that you'll be lucky if you don't get your walking papers for this."

There was a gleam of satisfaction in the cashier's eyes that he could not wholly conceal, as if he rejoiced over the prospect of the boy getting bounced, and Bob's quick eye noticed it.

He and Craig had never been on good terms, especially since Bob discovered a big error in a shipping order handed to him by the managing clerk and pointed it out to him. Instead of being grateful to the boy, the cashier resented his smartness in finding him guilty of a piece of carelessness, of which he was ashamed, and from that moment he determined, by hook or by crook, to get Bob discharged. With this purpose in view he managed to have Bob's assistant transferred to another department, and secured the place of assistant shipping clerk for his nephew, Ned Shattuck, a freckle-faced, red-headed, disagreeable boy, with whom Bob found it hard to get along. Bob being boss of the shipping department, Ned had to take his orders from him, and from the first he did it in a surly, half-defiant way that made the shipping clerk feel like kicking him.

He had to remonstrate with Shattuck continually for the errors he made, and because he could not trust his assistant, Bob found that he had a lot more work on his shoulders than he had when Billy Davis was his side partner. Bob was always particularly careful to see that all shipments went out of the place correctly addressed, both as to name and destination, especially in the case of a rush order, of which the house had many each week. He gave watchful attention to even the smallest detail in connection with his department, and the result was that Mr. Waters rarely received any kind of a complaint reflecting upon his young shipping clerk. Consequently, he had come to regard Bob as one of his most valuable employees. The first trouble came soon after Noel Shattuck became his assistant. It was part of Noel's duty to assist Bob in marking the cases to be shipped. He did it in such a slipshod way that Bob had to call him down repeatedly. Noel didn't like his superior anyway, and this naturally increased his dislike for the smart boy in charge of the department. When Bob received one or a batch of shipping directions the first thing he did was to copy them off in his shipping receipt book in duplicate. The original he retained in the stub, while the duplicate went to the freight clerk of the railroad company with the goods.

Two weeks since Bob shipped an important rush order to Meredith & Company, wholesale

grocers in a neighboring city. Within a couple of days Mr. Waters received a big kick from the firm in question because the goods had not arrived. The complaint was turned over to Craig for investigation. He looked up the matter in Bob's shipping book and discovered that the boy had, according to the evidence, shipped the goods to Toledo, Ohio, instead of Cleveland, in the same State. That's the way the stub read, and the duplicate on file with the freight agent coincided. Bob looked long and hard at his handwriting, which struck him as having a suspicious dissimilarity with his customary pot-hooks, but as he was the only one who used the book he found himself up against it, and had to accept the blame. It was his first important mistake, and though he felt pretty badly over it, Mr. Waters readily excused it, though he came near losing Meredith & Company as a customer. Now, inside of the fortnight, he was accused of a second error, and, if anything, a more serious one. He remembered the two shipments in question, and, positive that he had made no mistake, he rushed from his shipping book to prove to Mr. Craig that the blame for the matter surely lay in some other quarter.

Berry & Berry, of Buffalo, N. Y., had ordered the deviled ham; Smith & Company of Elmira, N. Y., had ordered the corn. Bob knew that, and he turned to the two stubs, confidently expecting to verify the correctness of his shipments. To his astonishment and consternation he found the thing reversed, and yet he could swear he had written the orders down correctly.

"Well," sneered Craig, who noted with satisfaction the expression on Bob's face, "I suppose you can prove that the fault lies with the railroad?"

"There's something wrong here, Mr. Craig," Bob said, in a bewildered tone. "I can swear that——"

"I've no doubt you'd be willing to swear to anything to crawl out of a hole," replied the managing clerk, sneeringly, walking over to Bob's desk and glancing at the stub. "But here is the evidence against you in black and white. You can't get away from it, and I reckon there'll be something doing in the morning when Mr. Waters calls for this book and sees that the blunder is due to your carelessness."

"But I know I sent the case of deviled ham to Berry & Berry, and the corn to Smith & Company," fluttered Bob.

"Oh, you do know it—you are willing to swear to it in spite of the evidence to the contrary in your own handwriting? Then how do you account for Berry & Berry sending us this telegram?" and Craig flashed the yellow document triumphantly under the boy's eyes.

The despatch stated that the case received by Berry & Berry contained canned corn, which they had not ordered, and the firm wanted to know where the deviled ham was that they had ordered, and for which they had duly received the bill by mail. Bob stared at the telegraph blank like one in a dream. The evidence was certainly piling up against him.

"Well," said the managing clerk, sharply, "what explanation have you to offer?"

"Nothing," replied Bob, shortly, going back to the case he was lettering and resuming his work,

for the truckman was waiting for the cases, and Noel was busy in the next room packing some boxes with boned chicken on a hurry order.

CHAPTER II.—In Which Bob Finds Ground for His Suspicions.

As soon as the truckman drove off with his load Bob went to his desk, and taking the shipping book, turned to the two stubs where the blunder was recorded and began to study the writing attentively.

"That looks like my work, and then again it doesn't. I'm confident that I did not make any mistake in those two shipments, and yet these stubs say I did. Has any one been monkeying with this book? If so, why? Evidently to get me into trouble. Altering the stubs would of itself not count for much without a similar change being effected in the duplicates and the marking on the cases. Now, who could have done such a thing, if it was done? Noel Shattuck? He does not strike me as being clever enough to carry such a scheme through successfully. It is quite possible that he may be foxier than I have any idea of. One thing is certain—he doesn't like me a little bit. Neither does his uncle, Mr. Craig. This whole thing looks decidedly suspicious to me."

Bob folded the covers and unused leaves back, and also all the stubs but the first of the two he was about to submit to the reflection of the late afternoon sunlight. He examined the stub carefully, but there wasn't a single indication that any kind of an erasure had been made.

"It doesn't look—hello!"

The examination was caused by the stub suddenly coming away in his fingers. Laying the stub down, he pulled sharply on the second stub. That came away also, just as cleanly as the other. He laid the second stub down and pulled on the next, but it wouldn't budge.

He tried every stub back to the one containing the Meredith & Company entry—the first blunder of which he was accused—and all held fast except that one, which came loose just as the other two did.

"I begin to see a light," mused Bob, scratching his chin. "There has been crooked work here."

Examining the inner end of each of the three stubs, he saw a thin line of dried mucilage on each. Evidently they had been stuck in to replace the original stubs that had been carefully removed. Bob turned to the end of the book and easily detected where several sheets had been cut out.

"I think I will be able to make some kind of a defense at any rate, tomorrow morning, when Mr. Waters calls on me for an explanation," said Bob to himself.

Bob reinsterted the three stubs in their respective places and laid the book aside until it should be called for. Noel walked in at that moment to tell his boss that the boxes he had been packing were ready to be marked for shipment.

"All right," replied Bob, and lent him a hand to bring them into the room.

He had the shipping receipt made out and handed it to Shattuck to letter the goods by.

When the six o'clock whistle blew Noel put on his coat and hat and disappeared. Bob had to remain till the truckman came back for the boxes, which he had been instructed to do. Mr. Craig and the office force had departed half an hour before, and the hands employed on the four upper floors were leaving in bunches. Billy Davis, seeing the door of the shipping room open, looked in on his way to the gate.

"Hello, Bob," he grinned, "still at it?"

"Yes. I'm waiting for the truckman. Come in."

Billy entered.

"How are you and Shattuck getting on?" he asked.

"Don't mention it," replied Bob. "He's a lobster."

"Sorry you lost me, aren't you?"

"I should say I am. We hitched all right, Billy. Do you like it as well upstairs?"

"Not for a copper sou. I wish I was back here."

"Come over here, Billy, I want to talk to you."

Billy went over.

"You were transferred, Billy, to make room for Noel Shattuck."

"Tell me something I don't know."

"What do you suppose Noel was put in here for?"

"To help you, and work himself up."

"It's my opinion he was put here for another purpose."

"What other purpose?"

"To work me out."

"Go on! How could he? He couldn't hold down your job if he got it, which isn't within reason, for you fill the bill right up to the handle."

"Two serious mistakes in the shipment or orders have happened within two weeks."

"No!" cried Billy, in surprise.

"Yes. The first occurred thirteen days ago. Six cases of assorted canned goods for Meredith & Company, of Cleveland, went astray and there was the dickens to pay, as it was a rush order."

"How could that happen? You and me shipped enough goods to Meredith & Company to know their address with our eyes shut."

"That's right; but, nevertheless, the cases were billed and marked Toledo, and were recovered at the freight depot in that city."

"Shattuck's fault."

"If it was, who is responsible for Shattuck? Who was responsible for your acts when you were in the shipping room?"

"You were," replied Billy, promptly.

"We pulled together for more than a year and we never heard of a kick from the trade."

"Not a kick," nodded Billy.

"If I had to watch, in a general way, the work of an experienced young chap like you, who seldom made a slip, I naturally had to keep a sharper oversight on a new assistant like Shattuck, who might be expected to make many errors until he got the run of things. Isn't that right?"

"Sure."

"Then I ought to have caught any mistake such as the marking of a well-known firm like Meredith & Company to Toledo instead of to Cleveland, don't you think?"

"I should smile."

"Look here."

Bob picked up the shipping book and turned to the stub containing the entry of Meredith & Company.

"What does that say?" he asked.

Billy read and gasped.

"You must have been thinking of something else when you wrote that!" he said.

"I never think of anything but what I am doing at the moment."

"Then how did you do it?"

"I didn't."

"Why, isn't that your writing?"

"It's a good imitation, isn't it?"

"Do you mean that Shattuck wrote that?"

"I don't know who wrote it, but I didn't."

"But if you were positive that you didn't write it——"

"I wasn't so positive then as I am now."

"Why are you more positive now?"

"Because a double blunder of the same kind has just happened."

"A double blunder!" cried Billy, with open mouth.

"Yes. What does that say?" asked Bob, pulling a couple of orders off his file and showing them one at a time to Davis.

"Four gross deviled ham—Berry & Berry, Buffalo. Two gross sweet corn, Sunrise brand—Smith & Co., Elmira. Well?"

"That's plain enough, isn't it?"

"As the nose on your face," admitted Billy.

Bob turned up the two stubs in the shipping book.

"What does that say?"

Billy whistled.

"Did you actually mix those orders up? It isn't your way of doing things?"

"Somebody mixed them up for me."

"Who? Shattuck?"

"Possibly. I'd give something to know the truth. I didn't fill in either of those stubs."

"Then how is it that——"

"I repudiate these three stubs? Because the original stubs were removed and these substituted in their places. Because there's crooked work going on in here under my very nose, and the object of it is to secure my discharge. There, you have the whole thing in a nutshell."

CHAPTER III.—Working Up a Case.

"Say, how could the original stubs be removed and these put in their places?"

Bob showed him.

"Where did the duplicates come from?"

"The back of the book," and Bob showed him the evidence of missing sheets.

"But how could such a game be worked under your eye?"

"It wasn't. It was done in each case at night. In both instances the shipment, after I had checked off the marking on the cases, lay over all night waiting for the truckman. Having no suspicion of foul play I did not consider it necessary to look at them again."

"You ought to see the night watchman. If Ned Shattuck had a hand in the business the watchman must have let him in to the shipping room."

"I'm going to ask him, but I don't believe he let Noel in at the gate. It is my opinion that if he helped in this scheme he came in at the front door with Mr. Craig, who has a key to the door, for he often comes here at night to pull up on his work."

"But the watchman would know if there was any work going on in this room."

"I dare say he would, if Mr. Craig didn't send him on an errand to keep him away from the premises for an hour or so. As soon as he went off Shattuck could have slipped in, attended to his part of the job under the cashier's eye, and then slipped away before the watchman got back."

"That's so," said Billy. "At any rate the watchman will tell you whether he was absent for a while or not any night."

"Yes. If he was, that will tend to confirm my deduction."

"If the originals and duplicates had only been numbered consecutively by a machine before they were bound up it would have been impossible for such a scheme to be put through without special printing, and that would have cost something."

"That's true; but shipping receipts are not usually numbered that way if numbered at all."

"If you are sure that the addresses on the cases were right when you examined them, the stenciling would show evidence of having been erased for re-marking."

"Of course. I mean to telegraph Berry & Berry, and Smith & Co. on my own hook in the morning for information on that head," said Bob. "Their replies ought to help my statement when I come to make it to Mr. Waters."

"I suppose the original stubs and duplicates were destroyed when the changes were made."

"Naturally. It wouldn't do for them to crop up at an awkward moment."

"If Shattuck did the job he might have hid them somewhere about this room. Why don't you hunt for them on a chance? I'll help you. There are lots of corners where such things could be shoved out of sight."

Bob thought Billy's suggestion a good one to follow out, so the two boys began a careful search of the shipping-room. They hunted for some time without success, until Billy shoved his hand into a big knothole in the floor in one corner. He felt something like crumpled paper, grasped it and pulled it out. It proved to be two of the stubs and duplicates they were after. He gave a shout of glee.

"Here's two of them, Bob. Maybe the other is here too."

It was, too, for he pulled it out on the second trial. Bob was delighted as he smoothed them out on his desk.

"We are getting at the bottom of this conspiracy by degrees," he said. "They proved that I made no error in either case."

"That's what they do," said Billy. "Now, if you could only prove that Shattuck is the guilty one you'd be all right."

"I may be able to do that. Do you see that mark?"

"Yes. What is it?"

"What does it look like?"

"The print of a thumb."

"That's right. It's a well-known fact in police annals that no two thumbs are ever alike. De-

TECTIVES have used that knowledge often to track down criminals from thumb marks imprinted on various objects at the scene of a crime. I will call the attention of Mr. Waters to this mark and will suggest that he get an impression of Noel's thumb. Then, if he cannot satisfy himself as to the identity of the two marks by comparison, he can submit them to the judgment of an experienced detective."

At this juncture the truckman entered the room, and Billy helped to load the boxes on his truck. As soon as the last was out of the building, Bob locked up and then, accompanied by Billy, hunted up the night watchman to let him know they were going, and also to ask him a few questions. As the watchman went with them to the gate, Bob said:

"Mr. Brown, did Mr. Craig come to the office any night this week?"

"Yes, on Monday night."

"Was his nephew, Noel Shattuck, with him?"

The watchman shook his head.

"Did Mr. Craig send you on an errand that night?"

"Why, yes. Soon after he arrived he called me into the office, told me that he had forgotten an important book he had taken to his house, and sent me for it."

"How long were you away from here?"

"About an hour and a half. Why do you ask?"

"I just wanted to know, because I have good reason to believe that some one was doing something in the shipping room one night this week, and I thought you would have called my attention to the fact if you had known about it. You did not see a light in the shipping room on Monday night when you returned with the book?"

"No. There has been no one in the shipping room at night at any time to my knowledge," replied the watchman.

"Thank you. Good-night," and Bob, with Billy, walked out at the gate and made their way homeward. "Well," he said to his companion, "you see the watchman was away from the premises an hour and a half on Monday night, and that was the night that the cases directed to Berry & Berry, and Smith & Co., lay overnight in the shipping room."

"Let's go around to the station house and find out what policeman was on beat that night. Then hunt him up and ask him if he saw a light in the shipping room Monday night. If he did he might have seen Shattuck in there."

"That's a good idea, Billy. We'll carry it out."

They went to the station house and Bob put his inquiry to the office in charge. He called the roundsman in question out of an inner room, where he was getting ready to go on post.

"I suppose you pass the Waters canned goods establishment several times of a night?" asked Bob.

"Yes. It's on my beat."

"Do you ever walk up the alley or lane where the fence is?"

"I do to try the gate."

"Do you remember what time you went up there Monday night?"

"About nine o'clock."

"Was there a light in the office at that time?"

"Yes. The cashier was working at his books."

"Did you see a light in any other part of the building at that time?"

"Yes. There was a light in a back room overlooking the alley. There was a boy in there lettering a couple of cases."

"You are certain of that?" asked Bob, eagerly.

"Yes," replied the policeman, looking at him rather sharply.

"Thank you. That is all I want to know. By the way, what is your name?"

"John Quigley."

"Much obliged. Here's a quarter to treat yourself to some cigars."

"One moment, young fellow," said the officer, as he took the money. "What is your object in asking me all these questions?"

"I am the shipping clerk of the Waters canned goods house. I wanted to find out if there was anybody working in my department on Monday night, that's all. The boy you saw in the room is my assistant. I simply wanted to get a line on his movements Monday night."

The policeman seemed to be satisfied, and the two boys walked out of the station.

CHAPTER IV.—Bob Turns the Tables On His Enemies.

Bob parted company with Billy Davis about two blocks from his own home, where he lived with his widowed mother and an elder sister, who carried on a millinery store.

"You're late to-night, Bob," said his mother, when the boy walked into the house and kissed her, as was his custom. "I suppose you were detained at your business."

"A little while. After that I put in about twenty minutes doing a bit of detective business."

"For Mr. Waters?"

"No, for myself."

"For yourself?" said his mother, in some surprise.

"Yes. There's been some crooked business going on in my department, and it was necessary for me to get to the bottom of it or the blame would rest on my shoulders."

"How did you succeed?"

"First rate. I fancy my new assistant will get the bounce to-morrow and that my friend Billy will get his old job back."

"You have never seemed to be satisfied with your new helper."

"No. I've now caught him in a dirty trick to do me up, and when I bring the matter to Mr. Waters' attention in the morning I expect to get rid of him for good and all."

"Well, your supper is ready. Sit up to the table. Bessie has been home, had hers, and went back to the store."

So Bob, with sharpened appetite, sat down and made short work of his supper. Next morning, on his way to work, Bob sent off the telegrams to Berry & Berry, of Buffalo, and Smith & Company, of Elmira, requesting an immediate answer, to be addressed to himself. He was always among the first of the employees to report to the time-keeper in the morning at the gate, and this morning was no exception. Noel Shattuck came swaggering in shortly afterward.

"Here's an order for you to begin on, Shattuck," said Bob. "Three gross potted tongue; one gross Lima beans; one-half gross desiccated chicken; ditto boned turkey. Then into the same case you want to put the eight dozen assorted plum pudding and four dozen mincemeat that were delivered here yesterday afternoon. You'll find them in that small box near the door. You might as well take this order for Sunrise corn, six gross, at the same time. That will keep you busy for a while."

"One would think you were the boss of this establishment by the way you order me about," replied Shattuck, sulkily.

"I'm the boss of this room, and that's all that need worry you," replied Bob, sharply.

Soon after Craig entered the room with a batch of orders that had come by the early mail.

"Here, fill these, Barron," he said, in no friendly tone. "See that you don't make any more mistakes. How do you expect to square yourself about the Berry & Berry and the Smith & Company blunders? We haven't heard from Smith yet, but I dare say there'll be a letter, raising Cain with us, in the next mail."

"I'm not worrying about the matter, Mr. Craig," replied Bob, coolly.

"I suppose you think Mr. Waters will overlook it like he did your Meredith & Company error?" he snorted, wrathfully. "You'll find yourself mistaken, I'm thinking."

"I shall try to prove to Mr. Waters that I'm not to blame in the matter."

"How are you going to do it?" asked the cashier, curiously.

"I haven't got all my evidence together yet, sir," replied Bob, evasively.

"Humph! I think the evidence is all against you," sneered Craig. "The entries in your shipping book are enough to prove your carelessness."

At that moment one of the clerks came in and told Bob that there was a messenger boy outside with a telegram for him on which there was sixty cents to collect.

"All right," said Bob, following him out.

He paid the charges, tore open the envelope and read the message. It came from Berry & Berry, and was perfectly satisfactory. When he returned to the shipping room Craig was in the packing room talking to his nephew. In a few minutes he returned to the counting room. At eleven o'clock Bob received a C. O. D. message from Smith & Company, which was also satisfactory. Mr. Waters did not appear till half-past eleven. By that time Craig had received a letter of complaint from Smith & Company. Armed with that, and the Berry telegram, he marched into the private office to make matters hot for Bob. His report surprised and displeased Mr. Waters, who sent at once for Bob. The young shipping clerk immediately responded.

"Well, Bob," said Mr. Waters, gravely. "I have received a bad report about you from Mr. Craig. It seems you have made another serious blunder in the shipment of our goods. I hope you may be able to clear yourself."

"I am satisfied that I can, sir."

"Very well. Sit down and let me have your explanation."

Bob had brought the shipping book, the original

orders from the two firms, and his own evidence, witnesses excepted.

"I am going to prove to you that not only I have made no error in the cases in question, but that the Meredith & Company matter was not my fault, either," he said.

"I think your shipping book showed conclusively that you sent the Meredith order to Toledo instead of to Cleveland," replied the head of the house.

"It did, sir. And the shipping book will also show that I forwarded the Berry & Berry order and the Smith & Company order wrong, too."

"Then how do you expect to clear yourself?" asked the merchant, severely.

"By proving that, in the three instances in question, the shipping book lies."

"Indeed. And if the shipping book lies, as you say, who is responsible for that? I believe the book is in your sole charge; that no one but you makes any entries in it."

"No one but me has any right to make any entries in it, but I have evidence to show that the book has been tampered with."

"Go on."

Bob lost no time in laying the facts before his employer, which he backed up with the original sheets of the shipping book found by Billy Davis in the hole in the floor, and by the two telegrams he had received from Buffalo and Elmira. He also showed how the false stubs had been gummed in the book. Then he repeated what Policeman Quigley told him in Billy's presence. What he got through the matter wore a very serious aspect to Mr. Waters. He called a clerk in and told him to send for Billy Davis. Billy, when he arrived, corroborated the points in which he was involved. Mr. Waters then sent for Noel Shattuck.

"Did you return here Monday evening and do some work in the shipping room?" he asked that youth, when he appeared. Noel looked startled, but promptly denied that he had been in the building on Monday night, or any other evening since he had come to work there. Craig then received a summons to step into the private office.

"Mr. Craig," said Mr. Waters, "I believe you returned to the office Monday evening to do some work?"

"Yes, sir."

"Was your nephew here, also?"

The managing clerk flashed a swift look at Noel before replying, then he said, with emphasis, "No."

"What have you done about those two cases—the deviled ham and the corn?"

"I telegraphed both houses to reship them to each other at our expense."

"Quite right. That is all. You and Shattuck may retire; you, too, Bob."

Craig looked at Bob as he passed through the counting room, and he did not like the confident look on his face. He stopped his nephew.

"What did the old man want with you?" he asked him.

"He asked me if I came back here Monday night and did anything in the shipping room."

"And what did you say?" asked his uncle, anxiously.

"I said no, of course. What else should I say?"

"That's right. See that you stick to it if he should ask you again."

"Of course I will."

After Noel went back to the shipping room Craig did a lot of hard thinking.

"Who the deuce could have given the boss a hint that Noel was here Monday night? Can it be that Barron has a suspicion of the real facts and told Mr. Waters? Pshaw! What of it? Suspicion amounts to nothing. I take care to get the watchman out of the way long enough for Noel to do the trick, so it is impossible for Barron to prove that he was here, no matter what he suspects."

With that reflection he returned to his work. Mr. Waters remained unusually late at the office that afternoon. In fact, he stayed until the six o'clock whistle blew. Then he sent for the night watchman and had a brief talk with him, after which he put on his hat and coat and went to the station house, where he asked for Policeman Quigley. He had a talk with Quigley and then went home. Next day at four o'clock the policeman called at the establishment and asked for him. He was shown into the private office, and then Mr. Waters sent for Shattuck.

"Is this the lad you saw in the shipping room Monday night?" he asked Quigley, when Noel appeared.

The officer said it was, and Noel turned a sickly white.

"I thought you told me that you were not in the building Monday night," said the merchant, sternly, turning on the boy.

Noel was silent.

"You were here, weren't you?"

"Yes, sir," quavered the unhappy youth.

"Why did you deny the fact, then, yesterday morning?"

"I thought you might be angry with me for being here."

"Indeed. What were you doing in the shipping room?"

"Reading."

"What was he doing, officer?"

"He seemed to be marking cases, with stencil letters and brush."

The merchant stepped to the door and called Craig in.

"You told me yesterday that your nephew was not here Monday night. This policeman, whose beat is in this neighborhood, saw Shattuck in the shipping room Monday night marking cases. Do you mean to tell me that you did not know he was there?"

Craig was in an embarrassing predicament. Finally he reluctantly admitted that he did know that his nephew was in the building.

"Then, why did you deny it when I asked you the question yesterday?" asked Mr. Waters.

Craig tried to shuffle out by giving an evasive answer.

"I am very much obliged to you for your evidence, officer. That will be all," said the merchant.

He handed Quigley a \$5 bill, and the policeman departed. Mr. Waters then told a clerk to request Bob to bring the shipping book into his private office. Bob presently appeared with it.

"Now, please repeat the story you told me

yesterday morning and show the exhibits in the case, Bob," said the merchant.

Bob obeyed, and before he was half done Craig and his nephew were both in a state of consternation.

"You accuse Shattuck of this trick, I believe, and my head clerk in aiding and abetting him?"

"Yes, sir."

"It's a lie!" hissed Craig.

"I think the evidence, both circumstantial and direct, is sufficient to warrant a grave suspicion of the truth of Bob's charges. At any rate, you will pay your nephew his week's wages and dismiss him at once. Perhaps I will have something more to say to you on the subject later on. You may go back to your desk. Bob, send upstairs for your former assistant, Davis, and put him to work. That is all."

Craig waylaid Bob on his way out.

"It is evident that you're the old man's favorite, and have lied your way out of trouble. But I'll get square with you for this, mark my word!" he hissed.

Bob gave him a glance of contempt and passed on without saying a word.

CHAPTER V.—The Robbery of the Safe and Its Complications.

"This is like old times, Bob," said Billy, as the shipping clerk handed him an order to pack a case with Sunrise corn. "So Shattuck got the bounce?"

"He got it straight from the shoulder, and it served him right," replied Bob.

"Well, I'm glad that you got the better of those two. It was a low down trick that they tried to work on you, and they came mighty near putting you in the soup."

"That's right, Billy. Now, get a move on. That little rascal put me behind in my work. See if you can't help me to pull up."

"I'll help you, bet your boots," said Billy, as he started for his old stamping-ground—the packing room.

As the orders came rushing in the boys had all they could do the next few days to hold their own. On Saturday afternoon the establishment closed down at five o'clock. Bob and Billy had to work an hour later to get some orders away that night. As the office help were putting on their coats to depart one of the junior clerks came out into the shipping room and told Bob that Craig had resigned his job and wouldn't be at the office any more.

"Is that so?" replied Bob. "I can't say that I feel bad over it. He wasn't a friend of mine—quite the other way."

Bob and Billy quit at six and went home. Bob had hardly parted from his assistant before he recollected that he had left his pay envelope on his desk in the shipping room.

"Gracious! I'll have to go back for it," he exclaimed.

So he turned about and hastened back to the canning establishment. He took a short cut that brought him to the alley where the gate was. He intended to knock there until the watchman came and let him in. When he reached the gate he was surprised to see that two boards had been

removed from the fence. He looked in at the hole and saw the boards lying on the ground, bent and broken. Then he remembered that the truck had backed against the fence that afternoon and had no doubt damaged it.

"The night watchman is repairing the breach," he said to himself, when he spied a nail box with a hammer lying close by. "I'll just slip in here and save him the trouble of opening the gate for me."

He did so, and was soon in the shipping room. His pay envelope was where he left it, and he put it in his pocket. Noticing a light in the office, he glanced in and saw Craig at the safe. He was taking out several bags of money and placing them in an oblong japanned tin box. Bob also saw him empty the loose change into it from the cash box. Such strange proceedings on the part of a man who had given up his position in the house aroused the boy's suspicions.

"I believe the rascal is robbing the safe to get square on Mr. Waters. Probably he was discharged, and gave it out to the clerks that he had resigned. I must keep my eye on him, and stop him if he starts to walk out the front door with that box. He acts as if he was doing something underhanded. Just as if he was afraid some one might see what he is doing. Unless the night watchman has learned that Craig has severed his connection with the house he would hardly pay much attention to his presence in the office alone, for the cashier has always had full swing around the place. Well, I'm sure he's doing something that he oughtn't to do."

Craig snapped the spring lock of the box, shut the safe to, and then, after a cautious look went out the door leading into the yard.

"He's going out the back way," breathed Bob. "That isn't a good sign. Perhaps he gave up the keys to the front door and can't get out that way. In that case he must have entered either through the hole in the fence or he got the watchman to let him in. Well, I'm going to stop him, and demand an explanation. If he puts up a fight I'll call on the watchman to help me."

Bob hastened to let himself out into the yard. In his hurry, and the gloom of the shipping room, he tripped over a small box and went sprawling on the floor. This delayed him, and it was several minutes before he stepped outside and hastily turned the key in the lock of the door. Then he saw the late managing clerk just vanishing through the hole in the fence. Unfortunately for Craig, a couple of hard-looking ruffians, who had planned to scale the fence and break into the office of the establishment by the rear way, were holding a final consultation a few yards away. As Craig stepped out into the alley the rascals saw him at once with the tin box, which looked as if it contained something valuable, in his hand. He, on his part, did not notice them until they pounced upon him and bore him to the ground. The tin box fell with a clatter to the ground, and striking a big stone, the spring released the cover and the box, turning half over, dumped a portion of its contents into the dirt. Bob, as he crept after the recreant cashier, heard the sudden disturbance outside and wondered what it meant. Cautiously the boy thrust his head through the hole in the fence. He was astonished to see Craig on the ground struggling

with two masked men. The cash box lay close by. With a thrill of satisfaction Bob reached for it. Drawing the japanned box to him he righted it and lifted it inside the hole.

Then he felt for and recovered the coins that had escaped when the box turned over. A final peep into the alley showed him that the ruffians had subdued Craig and were gagging him with a handkerchief.

"This is the greatest thing I ever saw," breathed Bob. "I wonder who those scoundrels are who jumped so suddenly on the cashier. They must have been lying in wait for him outside. Probably they saw him through one of the windows taking the money from the safe, and then laid their plans to rob him of the box when he came out. They'll be looking for the box in about a minute, so I'd better make myself scarce around here. They'll be mightily surprised when they find that it has disappeared. The hole in the fence, however, will suggest the way that it vanished and they'll come into the yard to hunt for the person who got away with it under their noses. I wonder where the watchman is. I must find him."

Expecting to find the watchman about the engine house he started in that direction. When he reached the engine house there was no sign of the watchman. While he was looking around he heard a racket at the fence.

"Those rascals must be up against somebody else now. Can it be the watchman?"

At that moment there was a flash and a report.

"Gee whiz! Somebody is shot," palpitated the boy, keeping close in the shadow of the engine house, for he wasn't looking for trouble. Then he recognized the watchman's voice. That altered the situation, as he deemed it to be his duty to go to the assistance of Brown if he in trouble. He shoved the tin box under the pile of lumber, picked up a stick of wood to use for a weapon, and started for the break in the fence. He found no one at the opening, but on peering out saw a form lying motionless on the ground in the alley, who looked like one of the ruffians, while a little distance away he saw a figure bending over another man on the ground.

"I guess you're all right now, Mr. Craig," said the voice of the watchman, and then Bob understood the situation.

Brown had been away somewhere, and on his return had been attacked by the masked rascals in the same way they had done up the ex-cashier. The watchman, however, was a harder nut to crack, and in the struggle he had drawn his revolver and shot one of the scoundrels. The other had then taken to his heels and disappeared.

As Bob stepped out into the alley another figure appeared from the direction of the street. It was a policeman—officer Quigley, who had just come on his beat. Bob and the policeman reached the two men about the same time.

"What's wrong here?" asked Quigley.

"Why, hello, Barron, what are you doing here at this hour?" asked Brown, in surprise.

"I caught two rascals coming out of a hole in the fence with Mr. Waters' cash-box in the hands of one," said Craig, glibly, trying to turn the incident to his advantage, for he knew the box

was lost to him. "I tried to get it away from them when they jumped on me and laid me out. Then the watchman turned up and shot one of them. You'll find the cash-box somewhere around here in the dirt."

Quigley accepted Craig's statement for fact and went over to look at the fallen crook, while Brown struck a match and started to look for the box.

"Hold on, Mr. Brown," said Bob. "I know where the box is, so you needn't hunt for it."

"Where is it?" asked the night watchman.

"It is safe for the present. I will be responsible for it," replied the boy. "You told that story pretty well, Mr. Craig," he added, turning to the ex-managing clerk. "It's a pity it isn't true."

"Why, you little puppy——"

"Officer Quigley, will you come here?" asked Bob.

The policeman, after examining the motionless rascal, was just coming forward.

"Did you shoot that fellow?" he asked the watchman.

"I did, in self-defense," replied Brown.

"Well, the man is dead. It will be necessary for me to place you under arrest."

"I'm sorry I killed him," replied Brown, in a shaky voice. "I didn't aim at him with that intention. It was a question of saving myself, and it was all done in a twinkling."

"I recognize the fellow as a well-known crook, so you'll be able to offer a good defense," said the officer. "I have no alternative but to take you to the station house and report the facts. You'll be held for the action of the coroner, who may see fit to parole you, or let you go altogether."

"All right," replied the night watchman. "I can't help myself. I wish you'd notify Mr. Waters, Bob, and stay around the establishment over Sunday."

"I'll attend to that, Mr. Brown. Now, officer, I request you to arrest Mr. Craig here, also."

"What for?" asked Quigley, gruffly.

"I charge him with rifling the office safe and trying to get away with the money in the cash-box he spoke about," said Bob, resolutely.

"Why, you miserable little whelp!" roared Craig, raising his fist to strike his young accuser.

"You take him to the station house, Officer Quigley, and I'll go along and make the charge. I'm ready to swear that he took the money, for I saw him do it."

"You little liar!" hissed Craig.

"If you don't take him in, Mr. Quigley, you may be up against it when Mr. Waters, after he hears my story, reports the case to the captain," insisted Bob.

The officer was in a quandary. Finally he decided to take Craig with him and let the sergeant at the desk in the station house decide the matter of holding the ex-cashier.

"Well, I'll take the three of you along, and you can have it out with the officer at the station, young man."

Craig reluctantly yielded and the party set off for the station house.

CHAPTER VI.—Bob Is Rewarded and Craig Gets Another Job.

When they all lined up before the desk Officer Quigley reported the shooting and said he had arrested the night watchman on his own admission of having shot the man, who, he said, was a crook. Brown, on being asked if he had anything to say, made a statement of the occurrence, claiming that the shooting had been done in self-defense. He was locked up pending the coroner's investigation. Quigley then told the sergeant that Bob Barron had demanded the arrest of Craig, who was an important factor in the incident that preceded the shooting. Bob then told why he had returned to the canning establishment after leaving at six o'clock with his assistant, Billy Davis; how he had seen a light in the counting room, and looking in, he had seen Craig, whose connection with the house had ceased at five o'clock, taking money and bills out of the safe and putting them in the tin box.

"That looked decidedly suspicious to me," went on Bob, "and I decided to stop him from getting away, especially as he started to make his exit by the yard. He got out through a hole in the fence before I could reach him. Then I heard a noise in the alley and looking out saw that Craig had been attacked by two masked men, who I was satisfied were crooks. It would have been folly for me to have gone to his assistance, as the men were powerful enough to do me up in short order, so I did the next best thing—I recovered the cash-box and went in search of the watchman, whom I supposed to be about the yard somewhere. He was not, however, and about the time I had ascertained the fact I heard the shot in the alley and the watchman's voice. Believing that he had also been attacked by the same men I hid the cash-box, and grabbing a piece of wood, went to his aid."

Bob then told how he and Officer Quigley arrived simultaneously on the scene, and what took place before they left the spot for the station house. Craig was asked what he had to say to the boy's story. He denounced it as a lie, and repeated his former statement that he had seen the crooks coming from the building with the cash-box, and that in the interest of his late employer he had tried to get it away from them with the unpleasant result that followed.

"I'll have to hold you, Mr. Craig," said the sergeant. "I'll send a detective around to the place. If the crooks entered the office and stole the cash-box, as you say they did, there will be some evidence on the premises to substantiate your story. If the money was in the safe they couldn't get it without blowing the door open."

With that the sergeant ordered an officer to lock the ex-cashier up. He made a vigorous kick against the indignity, but it didn't go. Bob hurried from the station back to the canning establishment, and after covering the hole in the fence with a couple of boards, he entered the office and got into communication with Mr. Waters, at his home, over the telephone.

He told him all that had happened. Mr. Waters thanked and complimented him for the part he had taken in the interest of the house, assured him that his services would not be forgotten, and

said that he would be downtown right away. While Bob was thus employed a patrol wagon came from the station and carried away the body of the dead crook. A detective also appeared and began an investigation, though Bob told him that he would find nothing to substantiate Craig's story. He showed the officer the tin box into which the ex-cashier had jumbled the cash he had taken from the safe.

The detective had about closed his investigation when Mr. Waters made his appearance. He recognized the three bags of silver coin in the tin box as part of the money left in the safe when the office was closed at five o'clock. He opened the safe and the absence of anything in the shape of money confirmed his statement, and was pretty good proof of Bob's story.

He decided, however, not to prosecute Craig, and sent Bob to the station to withdraw his charge. The late managing clerk was then permitted to go free, but was told that he would be required to appear as a witness before the coroner's jury on Monday morning. A temporary night watchman was secured and Bob was enabled to go home.

The coroner's jury on Monday morning found Brown had acted in self-defense in killing the crook, whose death was regarded as a benefit to the public, and the coroner discharged the watchman from custody. On Monday afternoon Mr. Waters called Bob into his private office and presented him with the sum of \$200 as evidence of his appreciation of the boy's services on Saturday night. Bob told the merchant that he had not expected to be rewarded for doing merely what he regarded as his plain duty, and thanked him for the present. He opened an account in a savings bank with the money, and regarded himself as a small capitalist, for he had never owned as much as \$20 before in his life. There were other canning establishments in Millgate besides Mr. Waters'. The employees in all of them had been trying for some time back to get a raise in their wages. Mr. Waters was the only employer who had taken the request into consideration, but the best he would do was to meet his men half way. They wanted ten per cent, advance, and he offered them five. The men accepted the compromise with some dissatisfaction, as it was better than nothing. The other proprietors refused to make any advance whatever, and there was talk of a strike at their establishments. The Waters people had been invited to join, but as they were now receiving a five per cent. advance they hesitated to participate in the movement. This hesitation, however, was not a unit.

There were hot-headed kickers on the different floors who were eager to take part in anything that promised the full ten percent. advance they were looking for. If the working forces of all the factories except the Waters plant went on strike it would mean a considerable increase of business for the latter. This fact was appreciated by the other proprietors, and they were much put out with Mr. Waters for yielding the five per cent, advance, which they feared might keep his employees in line in case of trouble. They appointed a committee of two to call on their business rival for the purpose of persuading him to cancel the advance and stand in with them

on the wage question, but he declined to accede to their wishes on the ground that he believed the demands of the workmen were in a great measure just, and that he had raised the compensation of his own force to the extent he believed he could afford. This was the state of affairs at the time Craig severed his connection with Mr. Waters, and the ex-cashier took advantage of it to apply for a position in a rival house, and to suggest that his knowledge of Mr. Waters' methods and trade might be useful to the opposition.

The man to whom he applied thought so, too, and he had other thoughts in connection with the usefulness of Andrew Craig, and so, after consulting with the other canning men, Craig was employed to act in a special capacity by the opposition.

CHAPTER VII.—Bob On the Scent of Trouble.

"Say, Bob," said Billy Davis, one morning soon after the events just narrated, as he was hanging his hat and coat up preparatory to beginning work, "I hear that the men at Jenkins & Talbot are going on strike Monday for an advance in pay."

"I wouldn't be surprised if they did," replied Bob, who was aware of the rather strained relation that existed between the proprietors and the employees of the other canning houses.

"If Jenkins & Talbot's men go out it is almost certain to start a general strike in the other houses. Then we'll be the only establishment in our line doing business in Millgate."

"In which case, Billy, you and I are liable to be overworked," laughed Bob.

"You mean the boss will get a lot of trade away from the other chaps?"

"That's about the size of it."

"If we have to work overtime we'll get extra pay. So will all hands."

"Our people are not thoroughly satisfied with the five per cent. advance, but I don't think we'll have any trouble."

"I don't agree with you there, Bob," said Billy. "Reddy McCue, the foreman of the floor where I worked for the short time Shattuck had my place down here, was violently opposed to the hands accepting the compromise offered by the boss. And he isn't the only one holding the same opinion. Jim Orchard, on the top floor, with several pals, and Jude Starbeam and his cronies on the second floor, are hand in glove with McCue. Those men are in for trouble and will bear watching."

"They can't do anything, Billy, for the majority rules."

A few minutes before the six o'clock whistle blew that night Bob went to the shed where the cases were stored to pick out of a box an order that Billy was to fill first thing in the morning. While he was in there the whistle blew and the men knocked off work. He had pulled a box to one side and was measuring it with a ruler when men entered the shed. Bob recognized them as Reddy McCue, Jim Orchard and Jude Starbeam. They didn't notice him as they stopped just inside the door. After what Billy had said about these three Bob regarded their presence there as suspicious, and he listened to what they said.

"It's understood that we're to meet Andrew Craig to-night at the old house down the road," said McCue.

"At what hour?" asked Starbeam.

"Ten o'clock, sharp. He told me that there was a wad of dough in it for each of us."

"What's in the wind?" asked Orchard.

"That will all be explained to-night. He wouldn't say a word to me alone. He wants to be sure that we three will pull together."

"Oh, we'll pull together, all right, if there's money in it," said Orchard.

"That's what I told him. We'll meet at Beckley's saloon and go to the house together. Understand?"

"Yes," replied the other two with one voice.

"Get to the saloon at not later than nine, but the earlier the better. He gave me the price of a dozen rounds of drinks, which shows that he means business."

"I would like to know what Craig wants with us," said Starbeam. "He's a gent, and not one of us."

"That's right," interjected Orchard. "He's workin' for Jenkins & Talbot now. The hands of that firm are going on strike Monday, sure. He may be up to some trick."

"He'd better not try any funny business with us," said McCue; "not if he knows when he's well off."

"I should say not," nodded Orchard.

"We'll find out to-night just what his game is," continued McCue. "I think it has somethin' to do with this place, for he's sore on Waters. So are we, that's why we want to line up with him if there's anythin' in it, as he says there is. Well, let's be goin'. Don't forget. Beckley's saloon by eight, if possible, but not later than nine. The earlier you get there the more you get to drink."

With those words Reddy McCue led the way out of the shed, his cronies following at his heels.

"So those chaps are to meet Andrew Craig to-night at the old house down the road for a consultation over some project that means no good, I'll bet, for Mr. Waters," said Bob to himself, as he watched the three men walk across the yard toward the gate. Bob, having found a case to suit him, carried it over to the shipping room, where Bill, with his hat and coat on, was waiting to go home with him.

"You were a long time getting that box," remarked Billy.

"Yes, but it happened that I had something else to attend to at the same time. Come on, if you're ready to go," said Bob.

"I've been ready since the whistle blew," replied Billy, jumping up and following Bob outside.

"Shall I see you at the gym to-night?" asked Billy, as they were about to separate at the usual corner.

"No. I've got some business to attend to that will prevent me from being there," answered Bob.

"All right. Be good to yourself till I see you in the morning," said Billy, and the boys took different routes to their homes.

"I'm going out to-night on special business connected with the house, mother," said Bob, after he had finished his supper. "I can't tell when I'll

be home. It may be late. At any rate, don't worry about me."

"Very well, my son. Take care of yourself."

Bob knew that the expedition he was bound on had an element of peril attached to it, for Reddy McCue and his two cronies were tough citizens, and Andrew Craig entertained no kindly feelings toward him. If they caught him spying on them the chances were they would handle him pretty roughly, especially if their business was of a nature that would not bear the light of public scrutiny. In fact, there were a whole lot of things they might do to him that he wouldn't like, therefore, he figured that it would be well for him to provide himself with a weapon of some kind for self-defense. The only thing available was a short, stout, polished locust club, like an abbreviated policeman's billy, which hung on the wall near the head of his bed by means of a leather thong passing through a hole in the handle. Bob took this club with him when he set out for the old house down the road. He also carried a piece of candle and a box of matches. The house in question stood about a mile outside of town, on a lonesome stretch of the turnpike, and well back from the road. It had long been without a tenant, and was falling into ruin, for it was involved in a complicated lawsuit. No one ever visited the house, but an occasional tramp, perhaps, therefore it was a good place in which to hold a secret meeting. When he reached the road opposite the house he cast a wary glance up and down the turnpike, but it was deserted as far as he could see. Then he looked over at the grim old house, standing dark and silent in the midst of rank vegetation, which had blotted out the path to the front door and usurped the larger part of the yard. It was surrounded by a fence that had tumbled down in a dozen places. Thinking it the part of a wise general to make his approach from the rear, he made a detour by way of the bank of the creek, at one point of which he saw a small boat, half full of water, tied to a stake, and walked up to the kitchen annex of the building. Trying the door, he found it locked. He then transferred his attention to a side door, but that was locked, too.

"If the front door is also locked, as I should imagine it is, how are Craig and the others to get in unless they have a key?" Bob said to himself. "Maybe they don't intend to enter the house, but hold their consultation on the front stoop, which is well enough adapted for purposes of secrecy on such a dark night as this."

The front door was locked, and all the windows appeared to be nailed or otherwise secured. Bob returned to the rear again and studied the house. There was a tall water-butt at the back of the annex. By mounting this one could reach the roof of the kitchen. Bob proceeded to do this, as his object was to reach one of the windows of the upper floor, and see if he could enter the building that way. On reaching the roof of the annex he tried one of two windows, now within his reach, and, much to his satisfaction, found that he could raise the sash. He did so, and scrambled into a vacant room. As a matter of caution, though he did not believe there was any one in the house then, he removed his shoes and investigated the three rooms on that floor. The rooms were alike bare, and the floors covered

with a fine dust in which his stocking feet left tracks, though he didn't notice that fact in the dark. Having seen all he wanted to, and looked into the spacious closets, he descended the front stairs and examined each of the rooms on the ground floor, of which there were four, two on either side of the wide hall. They were also bare and carpeted with dust. He completed his survey with a visit to the kitchen and a glance down the dark stairs that led to the cellar. Nothing remained for him to do but await the arrival of Craig and the men he had arranged to meet there. An examination of the front door showed him that it was bolted, so it was quite impossible for them to enter that way, even if they had a key. Bob decided to return to the upper floor and keep a watch from the windows that overlooked the road. Striking a match and consulting his silver watch, he saw that it was half-past nine o'clock.

"Craig and the men ought to show up soon," he thought.

Presently he saw a horseman approaching from the direction of Millgate.

"I wouldn't be surprised if that was Craig now," muttered the young shipping clerk, keeping his eyes on the horseman.

Bob was satisfied he had made no mistake in his surmise when the man drew rein in the road fronting the house, dismounted, and led his animal in through the open and broken-down gate. As man and horse passed around the building toward the rear Bob recognized Craig without any great difficulty. He rushed to one of the rear windows just in time to see Craig tying his animal to the fence. The ex-cashier then returned to the front of the house and stood near the veranda, evidently on the lookout for Reddy McCue and his companions. It wasn't long before he saw three men coming down the road toward the house.

"There are the chaps, for a dollar," he said.

And he was right. The three men turned in at the gate and joined Craig. After a brief converse the party started for the back of the building. Looking down from one of the rear windows, Bob saw that Craig had a key to the kitchen door. A moment later the party entered the house.

CHAPTER VIII.—Bob Discovers a Plot To Wreck The Canning Establishment

Bob hurried to the head of the stairs and listened. He heard footfalls in the back, which, however, soon died away into complete silence.

"Where the dickens are they now?" Bob asked himself, after straining his ears for some moments. "I'll bet they've gone into the cellar. They can show a light down there and no one will see it. This meeting must be mighty important. Too bad I didn't think of hiding down there on a chance of them holding their confab there, as they are going to do. Now I'm afraid I sha'n't be able to get within earshot of them. No good of my staying up here. I must see if I can't get around the difficulty."

With his shoes in his hand, Bob slipped quietly down-stairs and made his way cautiously to the back of the house. There was no one in sight, so

there was no doubt but that the men were in the cellar. The door leading to the stairs was shut. Bob opened it carefully and listened. He heard voices proceeding from the fore part of the place. From where he stood he could see no light. He was too far away from the men to hear what they were saying. The only way to overcome that difficulty was to get into the cellar himself. This looked like a ticklish job for him to undertake. Still, he might as well be a thousand miles away as where he stood, for all the good it did him.

"I've got to enter the cellar," he breathed. "That's all there it to it."

To carry his shoes in his hand would embarrass him, so he stowed them away in the corner of a closet. Then, grasping his locust club tightly, he began the descent of the steps. Half way down he was able to look into the cellar. In the front part of the place, seated in a circle on boxes around a keg on which stood a candle in a bed of melted tallow, were the four men. Craig was addressing McCue and his cronies, and they were paying close attention to him. Slowly, step by step, Bob made his way to the bottom in the dense gloom which hid that part of the cellar. Getting down on his hands and knees, he crawled to the nearest wall, and then advanced toward them. He saw a pile of debris ahead, behind which he proposed to hide if he could reach it without discovery. He had almost gained his goal when his foot hit a bottle.

"What's that?" cried McCue, who was blessed with uncommonly sharp ears.

"What's the matter?" asked Craig.

Bob stopped with his heart in his mouth and hugged the ground as close as he could.

"I heard a noise just now."

None of the others had heard it, but Orchard suggested that it might have been a rat.

"I guess that's what it was," said McCue, much to Bob's relief.

Craig continued his line of argument, and Bob pushed forward till he put the pile of dirt and odds and ends between him and the men.

"Now you see," Craig was saying, "a general strike among all the canning houses is counted on, for the proprietors simply do not intend to yield to the men's demands."

"They'll wish they did before the strike is over," said McCue, darkly.

"That has nothing to do with me," replied Craig. "The moment the strike goes into effect Waters is going to hook in on the trade of the other fellows, for there doesn't seem to be any immediate prospect of a strike in his establishment, owing to the fact that he has given his hands a five per cent. raise."

"Don't you be too sure there won't be a strike there," said McCue, significantly.

"I have canvassed the situation and I don't see any indication of it."

"You don't know what's goin' on under the surface. There's plenty of kickin' bein' done."

"Not by the reliable hands, McCue. Most of the dissatisfaction is shown by yourself, Orchard, Starbeam and a few others; but there isn't enough to count."

"How do you know?" snarled McCue. "You ain't workin' at our place any more."

"No matter how I know. That's business. I

know a great deal more about the inside workings of Waters' place than you think I do. I know, for instance, that you three chaps are not over-loyal to your associates. That you are trying to engineer a walk-out in your factory, not simply to win the additional five per cent. advance, but because you hope to make a deal with Waters and then kill the project."

McCue sprang to his feet with an imprecation and thrust his hand toward his hip pocket, while Orchard and Starbeam looked as black as the ten of clubs. We will not attempt to repeat what he said, but it was more forcible than polite. His manner was extremely menacing, and Bob thought there was going to be serious trouble, but Craig never turned a hair. He coolly smoked a Turkish cigarette, and eyed McCue with the utmost indifference, not to say disdain. Much as Bob despised Craig, he could not help admiring his nerve. Although McCue was a ruffian at heart, and was strong enough to have crushed the ex-cashier with one hand, he was, nevertheless, intimidated by the man's attitude. Craig was one of those men who, under given circumstances, could overawe a mob of desperate and armed men by his eyes and the mere power of his will. In this case he did not open his mouth again until after McCue, with many unpleasant expressions, resumed his seat. Then he tossed the butt of his cigarette away and calmly lit another. After all, there was nothing to commend in Craig's courage. He was simply a cold-blooded rascal, whose education and associations gave him a power over ordinary scamps, and who, if put to the test, could give even such scoundrels as McCue cards and spades in pure villainy.

"Well," said Craig, coolly, "ain't I right?"

"No, you ain't right," snarled McCue, in an ugly tone.

"All right. We won't argue the matter. You know my opinion."

"Hang your opinin. What me and my friends want to know is what do you want with us? What's your game, anyway?"

"My game, as you call it, is this: I don't believe that you and your crowd can bring about a strike in Waters's."

"I say we can!" roared McCue.

"Nonsense! You only think you can. Even if you succeeded it wouldn't do you any good, for I know Waters better than you do. Now, as the case stands, next week every canning house in Millgate will have to shut down but Waters's. His place will continue to do business—more business than ever—unless——"

"Unless what?" growled McCue.

"Something happens to prevent him."

"A strike will happen."

"I can't take the chances on that. Something else must happen. Do you understand?"

"What else must happen?" asked McCue, curiously.

"That's what I invited you here to consider."

"What do you mean?" asked McCue, while his cronies looked surprised and interested. "What have we got to do with somethin' happenin' to Mr. Waters?"

"That's for you to say," replied Craig, with a shrug of the shoulders as he lit another cigarette.

"You have your price, haven't you?"

"My price?"

"Yes, your price. You three are willing to take some chances if you're paid well enough, aren't you?"

"What chances have we got to take?"

"The chances of detection, and detection means the Sate prison."

The men looked at one another, and McCue drew a long breath.

"What do you want us to do, and what are we to be paid for doin' it?" he said.

Craig studied their faces a moment before he spoke. He was about to throw the dice, and he was calculating the chances.

"Look here, McCue, I've got to have some guarantee that if you fellows do not want to go into the job, you won't squeal on me. There are three of you and I'm only one."

"What guarantee do you want?"

"This," said Craig, taking a paper from his pocket. "I want each to sign it with me. That will put us all in the same boat. Then it wouldn't be safe for you to open your mouths."

"Supposin' we won't sign that paper?" replied McCue.

"Then we quit right here, and you'll each lose the chance to make \$1,000."

"One thousand dollars! Do we get one thousand apiece if—we jine in with you?"

"That's the figure, but you've got to sign the paper before this thing goes any further."

"But if we do sign it, and then don't want to go into the game, maybe you kin put us in a hole with that paper," said McCue, suspiciously.

"No. The object of the paper is merely to protect me against you chaps blowing the gaff, as the saying is."

"Read it to us."

Craig did so. The paper implicated the undersigned in a certain unnamed conspiracy, a space being left blank for the scheme which Craig intended to fill in as soon as he had secured the signatures to it.

"Well," said McCue, turning to Orchard and Starbeam, "do we sign or don't we? If we do we'll get in line to pocket a thousand, if we don't, we kin go home, I s'pose."

Neither Orchard nor Starbeam relished the idea of signing the paper. It looked dangerous to them. Still, \$1,000 was a great temptation to them. They talked the matter over between themselves and finally decided to sign the paper. Craig produced a stylographic pen, spread the paper out on top of the box he had been sitting on, and handed the pen to McCue. Reddy signed his name where the ex-cashier pointed. The others followed suit. Lastly Craig signed the document himself.

"There, now, I've put my name to it. That puts us all in the same boat."

McCue and his comrades were satisfied.

"Now," said McCue, "what's your scheme?"

"The scheme is this: The moment the strike is on in the canning trade, Waters's establishment must be put out of business."

"How?"

"By you three men."

"What are we to do?"

"When the time comes I will provide each of you with a powerful dynamite cartridge. After the whistle blows to shut down for the day you will each lag behind on his floor—you, Orchard,

on the top; you McCue, on the third, and you, Starbeam, on the second. As soon as all hands are gone you will start the clock attachment connected with the bomb and place it in a spot where it will do the most damage when it explodes. They will be timed for thirty minutes. Then you will leave for home as usual. That's all."

"Do we get a thousand apiece for doin' that?"

"You do."

"When do we get it?"

"Five hundred down when I hand you the cartridges, and five hundred next morning after the job is done."

"It's a bargain as far as I'm concerned. What do you say, pards?"

"We're in on it," they answered.

"I thought I could depend on you," said Craig, in a tone of satisfaction.

Bob was so excited by what he had heard that he made an involuntary movement with one of his arms. His hand struck a small, empty box on top of the pile of refuse. Dislodged from its position, it rolled down and landed with a light crash on the floor. No rat could make that noise, and the four rascals sprang to their feet in consternation, while poor Bob thought he saw his finish.

CHAPTER IX.—Bob Exposes The Plot And Is Rewarded

For a moment there was a death-like silence in the cellar. Then Craig said, in a low, repressed voice: "It looks as if we had a listener; that some one besides ourselves is down here."

"Then he'd better say his prayers," said McCue, drawing his revolver, "for he's not likely to leave the place alive."

"If there's one here he's hidin' behind that pile of dirt," said Orchard.

"That's my opinion," replied Craig. "We must rout him out."

Bob, conscious that he was in a desperate fix, took a sudden and desperate means to try and save himself. One of his hands rested on the largest half of a brick. As the men started to close in on his hiding place he grabbed the brick and threw it at Craig. The ex-cashier saw it hurtling toward him and dodged, but not soon enough to wholly escape. The missile struck him on the side of the head, stunning him partly, and then, glancing off, flew straight at the candle. In a moment the cellar was in complete darkness and the rascals were placed at an unexpected disadvantage. Bob, quick to perceive his opportunity, sprang to his feet and dashed lightly for the stairs. He reached them and flew up into the entry before the candle was relighted and the rascals were ready to proceed to business once more. When they looked behind the dirt there was no one there.

"He's gone, whoever he was," cried McCue, with an imprecation. "We must follow him at once."

"You and Orchard start at once, while Starbeam and myself make a thorough search of the cellar," said Craig, wiping the blood from his face with his handkerchief.

By that time Bob, shoes in hand, was darting into the kitchen. The outside door was locked, out in a twinkling, then he took the key himself

out in a twinkling, then he took the key out and locked the door from the outside.

"I've got them caged for a while," he said, gleefully, as he pulled on his shoes. "Now for Millgate and Mr. Waters. I'll take Craig's horse and make an easier and quicker job of it."

Untying the animal, he jumped on his back and started for the gate. He heard a crash of glass behind.

"They've discovered they are locked in and are making a break for liberty," chuckled Bob. "They'll have a pretty job trying to catch me."

Pushing through the gate, he put spurs to his horse and galloped off down the road toward Millgate. Three-quarters of an hour later he was ringing the bell at Mr. Waters's home. It was close on to midnight, and the family had retired. Bob's summons, however, awakened the merchant, who opened his window and asked what was wanted.

"I'm Bob Barron, Mr. Waters. I want to see you right away on a matter of the greatest importance."

The ring of the boy's voice, not to mention his visit at that unseemly hour, told Mr. Waters that something decidedly unusual was in the wind.

"I'll be down in a few minutes, Bob," he said.

Then he shut the window, and partially dressing himself, hurried downstairs and admitted the boy.

"Come into my library," he said, leading the way.

Turning up the gas, and pointing to a chair, he said:

"I am ready to hear what you have to say."

Then Bob told his story, beginning with the brief meeting of the three men—McCue, Orchard and Starbeam—in old house down the road in advance of the hour arranged for the meeting; how he had entered the cellar after the arrival of Craig and the McCue crowd; what he had overheard while down there, and the sensational finish that he had inadvertently brought about.

"I made my escape on Craig's horse, and came direct here to tell you the particulars," concluded Bob.

"You're an uncommon boy, Bob," said the merchant, in a hearty tone that showed he meant it. "You have nipped a dangerous conspiracy in the bud, and no doubt saved my factory. Such zeal as you have voluntarily shown in my interest shall not pass unrecognized, I can promise you. I shall send for a detective at once and see what can be done about punishing these four rascals. The trouble will be that their absolute denial will offset your unsupported testimony. I judge it will do no good to cause their arrest unless the detective I will put on the case finds enough circumstantial evidence to in a measure corroborate your statement."

Mr. Waters went to his telephone and called up the station house. He asked that a sharp sleuth be sent to his house at once to attend to a difficult case. In half an hour one of the best detectives in Millgate responded. Bob told his story all over again, the officer asked him many pertinent questions, and then he was allowed to go home, the detective taking possession of the saddle horse. It was after two when the young shipping clerk turned in, and three o'clock struck before he got to sleep. When he reached the fac-

tory next morning he went to work just as if nothing had happened. Reddy McCue, Orchard and Starbeam also appeared and went to work as usual, Craig having convinced them that such would be the wisest course. The four conspirators were at first unaware of the identity of the person who had overheard their conversation in the cellar of the old house and, in making his escapes, had locked them in the building, but on the following evening McCue learned from a friend that he had seen Bob Barron at about half-past eleven o'clock the night before riding at breakneck speed out on the road into the town. That fact convinced McCue that Bob was the spy, and he hastened to tell his companions, as well as Craig. The four held a consultation, and it was decided to get square with the young shipping clerk at the first chance. Had McCue and his companions been left to their own devices it is probable that they would have skipped the town to avoid anticipated arrest. Craig, however, calmed their fears by assuring them that Bob's unsupported testimony amounted to nothing. That if they were arrested they could put up an indignant and absolute denial, which, in the absence of any proof against them, was bound to see them through.

"As far as I'm concerned," he said, "I can prove an alibi, and as an additional measure of protection I advise you to arrange with some of your friends to swear that you were in town all last evening."

"We will," replied McCue, taking the hint. "But I'd give somethin' to know how that boy discovered that we were goin' to meet at the old house. I can't understand it."

"Neither can I," answered Craig. "However, we'll settle his hash before long. He's altogether too smart to be allowed to run at large. It was through him I had to leave Waters's and he nearly got me into a bad scrape last Saturday afternoon. Now he's spoiled this scheme I had engineered to put the Waters's factory out of business. Altogether I've got quite an account to settle with him."

"And we'll help you settle it," said McCue, in a tone that meant no good to Bob Barron.

During the rest of the week the detective held several conferences with Mr. Waters, but sufficient corroborative evidence was not forthcoming to warrant the arrest of the conspirators, and so nothing was done. The canned goods manufacturer, however, decided to discharge McCue, Orchard and Starbeam from his employ, on the general ground that they were trying to incite a feeling of discontent on the wage question among the other employees. So on Saturday afternoon when they received their pay envelopes they also received a pink slip notifying them that their services were no longer required at the factory. Under ordinary circumstances they would have put up a big howl at their summary discharge, but on this occasion they did not consider it prudent to do so. Just before the hands were paid off that day Mr. Waters called Bob into his office and presented him with his check for \$500, in consideration of the special service he had rendered in detecting and exposing the scheme to destroy the factory. Bob was delighted at this evidence of his employer's appreciation, and he was still more pleased when Mr. Waters

told him his wages would be raised from the \$12 he was receiving to \$15. He was now worth \$700 in his own right, and felt more of a small capitalist than ever. On Sunday afternoon the people connected with the other canning house in Millgate met at a small hall and decided to vote to send their employers an ultimatum on the wage question—the ten per cent. advance must be granted or they would quit work in a body. Next morning a committee waited on the head of each establishment and notified him of the resolution adopted by the men. In every instance they were turned down. The result was that on Tuesday morning the Waters canning house was the only factory of the six in town that was in operation.

CHAPTER X.—Bob And Billy Aid Beauty In Distress

Bob and Billy heard on their way to work that the anticipated strike had just gone into effect. The majority of the other employees also knew about the matter when they reached the factory that morning, and little else was talked about on the three upper floors for the whole day. There was much speculation indulged in as to the outcome of the strike, but the general impression prevailed that the men would lose. At noon Billy went to the corner to get his lunch. He did this because he wanted to find out how things were going on at the rival canning houses—the whole group being within a radius of three blocks. When he returned he brought Bob a budget of news.

"There's almost a riot over at Jenkins & Talbot," he said, in some excitement.

"Is that so?" replied Bob, with an interested look.

"Yes. About twenty new hands arrived from Cleveland by the ten o'clock train. They were escorted to J. & T.'s factory by several police. When they reached the picket line they were greeted with hoots and jeers, and before they got to the strikers attached them with stones and their fists. The police reserves were hurried to the spot and I hear several arrests were made—among others Reddy McCue, who, with Orchard and Starbeam, is taking an active interest in the strike."

"The whole three ought to be yanked in and sent up," replied Bob. "They're a pretty hard lot."

"You bet they are," agreed Billy.

He would have thought them twice as hard if he had known what Bob discovered that night in the cellar of the old house down the road. Bob had been cautioned by both Mr. Waters and the detective to say nothing about his adventure, and so he didn't even tell his mother or sister.

"The proprietors of all the factories are working together as a unit, and are filling the strikers' places with new help as fast as they can get the hands. It is my opinion that all who quit work will find themselves in the soup by the end of the week," went on Billy.

"Well, I sympathize with the men, in a general way," said Bob. "Our people have been given a five per cent. raise. The other bosses ought to have done as well by their employees. They can

afford it if Mr. Waters can. The cost of living is going up all the time, little by little, and wages ought to keep pace with it, otherwise the workingman is bound to suffer."

"A fellow can't afford to get married these days, can he?" grinned Billy.

"Were you thinking about making some poor girl miserable?" laughed Bob.

"Me! Why, I'm only sixteen. What would I do with a wife? My folks need all my wages to help keep the pot boiling. I guess you're in the same boat, aren't you?"

"I haven't any ground for kicking," responded Bob, thinking of his \$700.

"Your sister has a growing business that is bound to make her independent, so I guess you're much better off than most young fellows in your position."

"Yes, my sister has accumulated quite a trade already. Her prices are reasonable, she turns out fine hats for the money, and she is well liked by her customers. She's doing fine now, and is bound to do twice as well in the future, if nothing unforeseen turns up to give her a set-back."

At that moment a crowd of the strikers appeared suddenly in front of the Waters factory, and began to hoot and howl at the workers on the upper floors, many of whom were looking out of the windows, for the one o'clock whistle hadn't sounded yet. Mud and small stones were thrown up at the unpopular people who had refused to join in the strike, and one or two panes of glass were broken. Fearing trouble, Mr. Morton, the new managing clerk, telephoned the facts to the police station. Bob and Billy heard the uproar in front, but they couldn't see anything from their windows, which opened on the alley.

"Gee!" ejaculated Billy. "Some of the strikers are paying us a visit. They're dead sore on our people for refusing to join them—just as if the men and girls would be such chumps. I hope there won't be a riot down here."

"The police will be around pretty soon and will chase them away," replied Bob.

At that moment there was a rattle of gravel against one of the shipping room windows.

"Hello!" cried Billy. "Some of those chaps have come into the alley."

They both went to the window and looked out. In the alley was a small crowd of tough boys headed by Noel Shattuck. As soon as Bob and Billy appeared at the window the young rascals set up a yell of derision and began a fusillade of pebbles and dirt.

"Blessed if Shattuck isn't at the head of the gang," said Billy. "I'd like to go out and punch his head."

"You know better, Billy. The whole crowd would jump you, and you'd be roughly handled."

"I guess they would," coincided his companion. "They're too cowardly to face a fellow singly. Shattuck seems to think he's some pumpkins now."

At this point the whistle blew, and all hands returned to work. The boys in the alley continued to pelt the windows of the shipping room, and to yell like a pack of wild Indians. Presently the man who did Mr. Waters' trucking drove into the lane and scattered them. But they all came back and roosted themselves on the top timbers of the fence which separated the lane from a large

vacant lot. First they amused themselves by pelting the truck driver, but stopped when he took his whip to them. They took refuge on the other side of the fence in the lot and contented themselves with taunting him as a scab. The strikers in front, after satisfying their resentment, retired before the police turned up, and there was no further disturbance that afternoon. When the whistle blew to shut down for the day, scattered groups of strikers had gathered all along the block. They were there to intercept Mr. Waters' workers and try to persuade them to join the general movement. They were also posted at either end of the lane. Mr. Waters had foreseen such a probability, and had requested the services of several policemen to prevent his hands from being interfered with. Half a dozen officers kept the strikers on the move in front, while others patrolled the rear street. This did not prevent the strikers from approaching many of the workers, but they gained nothing by it, for the Waters people were not taking any chances. Bob and Billy were, as usual, among the last to leave. They always walked up the alley to the rear street. A bunch of girls employed in the labeling department preceded them. One of these was a pretty, dark-eyed girl named Jessie Wiseman. She was the daughter of the engineer, and was very popular among her companions. She was about the only girl employed in the factory that Bob paid any attention to, and he appeared not a little interested in her. On her part, she seemed to be equally interested in the stalwart, good-looking young shipping clerk. Sometimes Bob was able to see her part of the way home, but he seldom got away when she did, as there was nearly always something for him to do after the whistle blew. On this occasion Bob and Billy left soon after Jessie and several of her intimates passed out at the gate, and the shipping clerk spied her in the midst of the bunch half way up the alley.

"Let's hurry after the girls, Billy," he said.

Billy grinned, for he knew that Bob was sweet on Jessie Wiseman. The girls, however, gained the street ahead of them, and the bunch broke up, Jessie and a single companion turning to the left, the others to the right. Bob and Billy reached the street just in time to see the two girls held up by Noel Shattuck and several of his crowd. Their object was to tease and frighten Jessie and her friend, for the street was almost deserted by this time. Jessie's companion was a timid girl, and her evident trepidation encouraged their persecutors to take greater liberties with them. At this stage of the game Shattuck grabbed Jessie by the arms and insisted on stealing a kiss.

"How dare you!" she cried, indignantly, trying to release herself.

"Ho!" ejaculated Noel. "That's all put on. You're just aching to be kissed. His companions stopped to see the fun, while Jessie, with flushed countenance, succeeded in snatching away one of her arms and striking Shattuck a smart blow in the face.

"You little wildcat," cried Noel, angrily. "I'll kiss you a dozen times for that!"

He grabbed her around the waist and attempted to put his threat into execution. No doubt he would have succeeded in spite of the girl's strug-

gles, but for the opportune arrival of Bob and Billy on the scene. Bob was hot under the collar when he saw how roughly Shattuck was handling the girl of his heart, and he sprang at him in a way that showed he meant business. He fairly tore Noel away from the girl, and then jabbed him a sockdolager under the jaw which sent Shattuck reeling back against his friends. He followed Noel up and gave him another thump that landed him on the sidewalk. Then he stood over him with flashing eyes.

"You little beast!" he cried. "How dare you attack Miss Wiseman!"

Shattuck picked himself up and glowered at Bob.

"Help me, fellers, and we'll knock the stuffing out of him," he said to his companions.

The young toughs began to line up for business. Bob saw there was trouble ahead, and he determined to force the fighting.

"Come on, Billy," he said, and he sailed right in at Noel and his crowd.

Billy followed at his heels, and he was as tough as any in the crowd himself. Both he and Bob had taken a course of sparring lessons of the professor at the public gymnasium, and they knew how to use their fists with good effect. The boys had practiced at a punching-bag till they had developed hard hitting qualities that now stood them in good stead against the half-dozen young ruffians opposed to them. The two girls watched the scrap that ensued with fear and not a little anxiety for the safety of their gallant defenders. Their trepidation soon turned into hope and admiration for the prowess of the two boys. Bob seemed to be lost in the midst of a small forest of swinging arms, that landed blows all over them, and then the tide of battle changed in their favor. Whack! Bob slugged Shattuck in the eye, tumbling him into the street. Biff! Biff! Biff! Two others went down under rapid cuffs from his and Billy's fists. Smash! Biff! Thud! Straight on the point of another chap's jaw landed Bob's mauler, and he fell back like an overturned ninepin. That settled the blattle. All who could get away took to their heels, leaving Shattuck and two of the crowd hors du combat. Those three had all they wanted, and made no attempt to continue the scrap. One held his jaw in his hand, another was caressing his eye, that would be black in an hour or so, while Noel, with a damaged eye and a puffed upper lip, glared at Bob in an impotent, vindictive way.

"Aren't you brave!" cried Jessie, regarding the ruffled Bob with intense admiration and respect. "It was awfully good of you and Billy Davis to help us. I am sure we can't thank either of you enough."

"Then don't try, Jessie," responded Bob, wiping a little blood from his cut lip. "You don't suppose we were going to let those young ruffians impose on you, do you?"

"I should say not!" chipped in Billy.

"Well, you were very kind to get into trouble on our account," said the girl.

"We only did our duty. I wouldn't let any one hurt you, Jessie, if he was as big as a mountain. You ought to know that," said Bob, resolutely.

The girl blushed and smiled.

"I think a whole lot of you, Jessie, and I won't stand to have you annoyed."

"Thank you, Bob," she replied, blushing more vividly than before, and flashing a grateful look in his face.

"Well, come along. Billy and I will see you girls all the way home, if you will permit us to," said Bob, taking Jessie by the arm and starting off, followed by the valient Billy and the timid Miss Carter.

CHAPTER XI.—Bob In a Tight Box.

The boys took the girls to their homes, and next morning when they met in the shipping room Billy referred to the scrap in high glee.

"Gee! But we did put it all over the crowd to beat the band! I'll bet they'll steer clear of us in the future. If they don't well, say! We won't do a thing to them, bet your life!"

"I didn't care so much about what I did to the others, but it did me a whole lot of good to punch Noel Shattuck," said Bob. "He deserved all he got, and more on top of it. The idea of him trying to kiss Jessie Wiseman! It makes me hot to think about it."

"You'd rather kiss her yourself," chuckled Billy.

"Don't get gay, Billy," flushed Bob.

"Get gay! Why, isn't it a fact? I'll bet you're just dying to put your arms around her and steal the sweetness from her lips. Yum, yum, yum!" grinned the little tormentor.

"If you don't shut up I'll use you for a punching-bag," said Bob, somewhat annoyed.

"You will—I don't think," laughed Billy. "What'll I be doing?"

"You'll be fondling a sore jaw in about two shakes of a lamb's tail."

"Pooh! Forget it! Wait till we get to the gym and get the gloves on. I'll make you look six ways for Sunday," and Billy danced about the room, making passes at an imaginary opponent.

Billy, however, was only bluffing, for he had a whole lot of respect for Bob with the gloves on. The whistle blew and they went to work. The strikers paid another visit to the factory during the noon hour, but confined themselves to invitations to the factory workers to come out and join them. Probably this was because there were several policemen on hand to keep order. They turned up again at six o'clock to persuade or intimidate Waters's people to desert the factory. Their own cause was not getting on very well. All the other factories had started up again in part and the outlook was not to their liking. Many of the girls had gone back to their jobs, too, while a few of the men had applied for their old jobs and had been taken on. The better element of the strikers that took no part in the disturbances were already discouraged at the determined front presented by the proprietors. The rougher chaps, however, tried to make them believe that in the end they would win. Reddy McCue was discharged after Craig had paid his fine, and now he, Orchard and Starbeam were concerting measures to make Rome howl. Their attention, however, was not directed against the five establishments that were in trouble, but, egged on by Craig, they were figuring on doing up the Waters establishment.

Several days passed and then, as every one

had foreseen orders began to increase at the Waters canning house. Customers of the rival houses, not being able to get the goods they wanted when they needed them, rushed to the only factory in Millgate that seemed able to supply them. The available quantity of corn, especially, that was in stock, soon melted away before the increased demand, and orders were issued for night work to keep pace with the present emergency. Bob and Billy were included in this, because they couldn't do the packing and shipping of the extra stuff in the regular hours. Now every night the factory was ablaze with gas jets from ground floor to roof, and the sight was not a pleasing one for the proprietors of the rival establishments to look at, for it meant that Mr. Waters was coining money at their expense. They had only been able to half fill the vacancies left by the strikers so far, and consequently their output was scarcely half as much as in normal times. Still they preferred to face their condition, and lose money, rather than knuckle down to their employees. They held a meeting, at which Andrew Craig was present, and he was offered a handsome sum if he could put a spoke in the Waters wheel. After the meeting Craig hunted up McCue, Orchard and Starbeam, and arranged for a meeting between the four that night in a rear room of the Beckley saloon. It happened that a newsboy overheard the arrangement, and also learned enough to give him an idea that there was trouble in store for the Waters factory. He was a particular friend of Billy Davis, so he thought Billy ought to know that there was trouble ahead. When Billy and Bob went to the corner restaurant for supper that night between six and seven, the newsboy was waiting at the gate to see Billy.

"Hello, Mickey," said Billy when he spied him. "what are you hanging around the alley for?"

"I wanted to see you about somethin' important."

"All right. You're looking at me. What is it? By the way, this is my friend, Bob Barron. Bob, this is Mickey Feeney. Go on, Mickey."

"I came 'round to tell you dat you want to look out for trouble."

"Trouble! What kind of trouble?"

Mickey then told how he had overheard arrangements made between four men, one of whom, he said, was a well-dressed gent, for a meeting in a back room at Beckley's saloon that night at eleven o'clock, to consider some way of putting the Waters canning house out of business.

"I thought you ought to know what was in the wind," said Mickey, "so I come 'round to post you."

"Four men, and one of them a well-dressed man," said Bob. "I'll bet they were Craig, McCue, Orchard and Starbeam. They're going to hatch up a new plot, or I'm a poor guesser. Billy, we've got to take a hand in this thing, and try and find out what kind of a game they decide to work," said Bob, as he and Billy took seats in the restaurant.

"How can we find out?"

"By going to Beckley's saloon, spotting the room they're in, and trying to hear what they say."

"That's a rather tough proposition, Bob."

"You're not obliged to tackle it, Billy. I can

go alone, only I thought that if two of us were on hand there'd be double the chance of catching on. These fellows are liable to do any desperate thing to stop our factory. It is only a week ago that they conspired to place a dynamite cartridge on each floor for the purpose of blowing up the building. But you mustn't mention it to any one."

"Is that a fact?" asked Billy, in surprise. "I didn't hear anything about that before. There was nothing in the papers about such an attempt."

"It isn't known to anybody outside the rascals themselves but me, Mr. Waters and a detective."

"How did you come to hear about it?"

"Never mind how I learned about it, Billy, but I did, all right. That is the real reason why McCue and the other two were discharged. They were considered too dangerous to have around the factory. But, remember, you must keep that to yourself."

"Sure. I won't say anything about it."

"Well, Billy, chaps who won't stop at using dynamite to carry out a scheme will bear a whole lot of watching."

"I should say so."

"After we get through eating you can go back to work. I'm going to the station house to see if I can find the detective who has been watching these men. I want him to know what's on tap to-night, and the three of us will try and catch them."

"All right," said Billy.

The waiter now brought their order and fell to with their knives and forks. After they had finished their meal Billy returned to the factory, while Bob went to the station house. He inquired for Detective Watson, but was told he was out.

"Too, bad," said Bob, "I wanted to see him about an important matter."

"He'll be back here between this and midnight," said the man at the desk.

"I might write a note and you can give it to him when he comes in," said Bob.

The officer handed the boy a sheet of note-paper and an envelope, and told him he could write his note on the end of the desk. Bob did so, and handed the sealed and addressed envelope to the man when he had finished. Then he went back to the factory. The whistle blew at ten o'clock to shut down.

"Billy," said Bob, "there's some old clothes in the closet. We'll put them on, tear a few more holes in them, and plaster our faces and hands with dirt. That will answer for a kind of disguise. As those chaps know me well I'll bandage my face up though I'd just come out of a hospital, and then I guess they won't recognize me very easily."

Billy agreed to his companion's suggestion, and when they left the shipping room together they were both pretty hard looking objects.

"You're a picture of hard luck, Bob," grinned Billy. You ought to have your photo taken in that get-up. You'd take the leather medal at a beauty show."

The two boys took their way to Beckley's saloon, which was not a great way off. When they reached it Billy remained outside, while Bob entered and looked around the barroom. There was a crowd of men drinking at the bar, and at

the tables. Many of them were strikers, and among them Bob noted Reddy McCue, Orchard and Starbeam. They were waiting for Craig to show up. Bob saw a vacant table in a corner, and he took possession of it, dropping his head on his arms and pretending to fall asleep. In about fifteen minutes Craig entered the saloon. McCue and his cronies separated themselves from the crowd and joined him. The four then retired to a back room, which they reached through a passage. Bob got up, and watching his chance, followed them. He found himself in a narrow passage with a door that communicated with the back yard. A light shone through some cracks, and in a moment he had his eye applied to one of them. He found himself looking into a small room furnished with a plain, round table and four chairs. The chairs were occupied by Craig and his fellows conspirators. By placing his ear to the crack Bob could hear quite distinctly what was spoken in the room. He listened intently to the details of a plot that Craig unfolded to the three rascals, and which they agreed to take a hand in. The plan was to climb the fence in the rear of the canning house, lay for the watchman, overcome and secure him, and then fire the building from the cellar. The scheme was to be put into effect some time during the early hours of morning by McCue and his pals, and they were to receive \$1,000 apiece if the scheme succeeded. Bob was so deeply interested in the piece of rascality that was being hatched in the room that he didn't notice the opening of the passage door leading into the barroom.

Craig had pushed an electric bell for the barkeeper to send his assistant to the room to take their orders for drinks. It was this man who entered the passage in his shirt sleeves. Of course he saw Bob and what he was doing. He grabbed the boy at once, exclaiming:

"What in thunder are you doin' here? Spyin' on the guests in the room?"

Bob looked up in a startled way. The man knocked at the door. McCue opened it after drawing a bolt. Then the barkeeper's assistant pushed Bob into the room.

"I found this chap looking through a crack into this room. He must have been listening to what you were saying."

McCue, with an imprecation, seized Bob roughly by the arm.

"Who are you and what are you spyin' 'round here for? Answer me, or I'll make a worse lookin' object of you than you are."

Craig and McCue's friends looked at the apparently wretched-looking boy in surprise and ill-concealed anger.

"I wasn't doin' nuffin'," mumbled Bob, huskily, holding down his head.

"What did you hear, you young villain?" roared McCue, shaking him violently.

Bob's hat fell off, his bandage became loosened, and dropped away from his face, and then Craig recognized him at once. With a howl of rage he sprang to his feet.

"It's Bob Barron, spyin on us again," he cried, furiously.

"By the Lord Harry, it is!" snarled McCue, pushing the lad into a corner and glaring at him with a murderous look. Jim Orchard and Jude Starbeam now identified Bob, and also

jumped up with cries of anger. Bob was clearly in a tight fix.

CHAPTER XII.—An Exciting Time At Beckley's Saloon.

"So, we've caught you this time, Bob Barron, eh?" said Craig, deliberately. "Well, I reckon we'll fix you for keeps. You've heard too much for our good, I've no doubt, and in self-defense we've got to silence you. Get something to tie him with, Starbeam."

Craig was showing the cool, heartless side of his nature—showing the kind of man he was, and Bob realized that he was up against a hard proposition when he was up against the ex-cashier. The boy, however, was plucky to a degree. He didn't intend to yield without a desperate struggle. Like a flash he sprang at McCue, before that powerful rascal even suspected what was coming, and dealt him a staggering blow in the face. It landed straight from the shoulder, and McCue went spinning back against the table, which went over and carried the rascal with it to the floor. In a moment the little room was a scene of intense confusion.

"Don't let him escape!" roared Craig, as Bob sprang for the door.

The barkeeper's assistant, who was a burly fellow, opened his arms to catch and detain Bob.

Biff! The boy fetched him an uppercut under the jaw that made his teeth rattle like a pair of castanets. He staggered back against Orchard, who was also trying to get at Bob. Craig, seeing that Bob had a chance to get away, made a rush at him, but Bob, who was thoroughly aroused, met him with a jab in the chest, such as he was accustomed to deal out to the punching-bag at the gymnasium, and Craig was stopped with a grunt. Bob took advantage of his temporary victory to reach the door and swing it open. He got no further, for Starbeam's hand gripped his shoulder like a vise, and Orchard reached out and grabbed him, too. This gave the others time to recover themselves. The scrimmage, however, had attracted notice in the barroom, and one of the persons who was in there made a dash for the passage. This was Billy, who, according to instructions, had followed Craig inside and then, seeing his side partner enter the passage after the four men, had waited for developments. Billy knew that Bob was in trouble, and he meant to help him out at any cost. He was right in his element when there was excitement in the air, and he dearly loved to take a hand in a scrap when the cause was a good one.

Billy reached the door just as the men in the room were piling on Bob and bearing him to the floor. One glance was enough for the young packer, and then he plunged into the melee.

He swung his tough fists right and left into the faces of the ruffians that had hold of Bob.

Swat! Biff! Whack! First Starbeam caught it, then Orchard, and then the barkeeper. And each thought a pile-driver had landed on their countenances. In the confusion that ensued Bob managed to release himself and staggered to his feet. Then, shoulder to shoulder, he and Billy stood the men off long enough to back away

through the doorway. The passage was now filling with excited customers of the saloon, who couldn't tell what was on the cards, other than a free fight. Craig was furious at the success of Bob in eluding them thus far, and when he recognized Billy Davis he felt the ground giving away under himself and his associates in guilt. McCue now had his revolver out, but a small spark of prudence prevented him from using it. To kill Bob before so many witnesses, even if he could, was taking more chances than even that ruffian cared to do.

"Make for the back door," breathed Bob in Billy's ear, as he smashed Starbeam a stunning jab in the nose.

Billy did so. The door was not locked, and the boy flung it open.

"Come, Bob," he shouted.

They started to dash out, only to land in the arms of a stout, shabbily-dressed man.

"Not so fast, young fellows," said the man, holding them tight. "Where are you going in such a hurry, and what's the row?"

At that moment the doorway was filled by Starbeam and Orchard, with McCue and Craig behind. The man who held the boys suddenly released his grip on them and turned his attention to the others, whom he recognized in the dim light. To Bob and Billy's surprise, he whipped out a revolver and said in a swift tone:

"Throw up your hands, the four of you. You're under arrest."

The man in the yard was Detective Watson. With his left hand he pulled a whistle from his vest pocket and blew a shrill blast. Craig and his associates were aghast, while the rest of the crowd fell back in dismay, piling over one another in their eagerness to regain the barroom. Two policemen came vaulting over the fence to the detective's assistance, while two others appeared at the front door of the saloon and prevented any one from leaving. Craig and McCue took advantage of their position behind Starbeam and Orchard to dart back into the saloon and try to escape that way. They soon found that such a move was useless. Watson paid no further attention to the boys, but Bob, recognizing him as the detective in disguise, spoke to him.

"Mr. Watson, I am Bob Barron, and this is my assistant."

"I wouldn't have known you, young man," said the detective, lowering his revolver as the two policemen slipped handcuffs on the unresisting wrists of Starbeam and Orchard, who, recognizing that the game was up, yielded without a struggle.

"We'll look after these men while you chase Craig and McCue," said Bob.

"They can't get away," replied Watson. "I have men in front."

"Gee! That's fine!" cried Billy, enthusiastically. "You'll bag the whole four."

"I expect to," replied the detective. "It was a lucky thing you left that note for me at the station, Barron. You put me on to a hot scent, and one I've been looking for since I got on the case. I guess we've got these chaps dead to rights this time."

"I've overheard enough to send them to State's prison, if I could only prove it," said Bob.

"We'll prove it somehow, if we have to work the third degree on them to make one of them turn State's evidence. Stay here with one of the officers while I get the other two."

The detective and the other policeman entered the now deserted passage and made their way to the barroom, where the crowd was huddled together, unable to get out at the front door. While the patrolman remained at the entrance to the passage, Watson pushed his way through the mob, looking for Craig and McCue. Neither was in the room.

The detective spoke to one of the officers at the door and was assured that no one had passed out. The detective then looked around the saloon, and saw the door leading off it. He found that it communicated with a narrow hall and a staircase running up to the floor above. Calling two of the policemen to his aid, they rushed upstairs and searched the rooms. An open window leading on a low roof suggested how Craig and his companion had made their escape. The detective sent one of the policemen to tell the officer in charge of the prisoners, in the back yard, to take them to the station house. The other policemen were ordered to follow the detective. Bob and Billy thus learned that Craig and McCue had escaped.

"Gee! That's too bad," said Billy.

"It's to be hoped that they won't get clear off," said Bob, in a tone of disappointment.

"What are we going to do now?"

"There's nothing more for us to do but go back to the factory, wash up, put on our clothes and go home. Come on."

So back to the canning establishment they went and were admitted by the watchman, whom Bob had previously notified to be on the lookout for them.

CHAPTER XIII.—What Happened at the Factory.

"We had quite a strenuous time of it to-night, you, especially," remarked Billy, while they were resuming their ordinary garments.

"That's what we did."

"So those chaps were planning to burn this place down before daylight, eh?"

"Yes, that was their purpose; but it's knocked in the head now."

"Craig and McCue will have to leave town now to avoid arrest."

"They will, of course, if they can get away."

"Craig seems to be the biggest rascal of the three, though I don't see much choice."

"He's got as much nerve as the three put together, if not more. I believe he intended to put me out of the way for good the way I heard him speak in that little room when McCue had me cornered."

"I turned up just in time to help you out, didn't I?"

"You did, Billy, and I'm mighty thankful you were so prompt. Well, are you ready?"

"All ready."

"Then put out the gas."

The gas was put out and they were preparing to leave when Billy found that he had dropped his pack of cigarettes in the closet or somewhere else.

"I'll look up the watchman and you'll find me near the gate, Billy," said Bob.

"All right. I'll lock the door," and Billy continued to grope for the missing cigarettes.

Bob walked into the yard to find the watchman to let them out. He found him sitting on the steps of the engine house, and they walked together to the gate. While Bob was giving him a rapid sketch of what had happened that night at the saloon, two forms crept toward them in the gloom. Suddenly each received a heavy blow on the head that stretched them on the ground. Bob was dazed by the crack, while the watchman was knocked out completely.

"Who is this chap with the watchman?" asked the voice of McCue.

Craig flashed a match and then uttered an exclamation of satisfaction.

"It's Bob Barron," he said.

"So it is," said McCue. "Then Billy Davis can't be a great way off."

"Never mind. Drag the watchman away from the gate. I'll attend to this lad," said Craig, grabbing Bob and raising him in his arms.

As soon as McCue rejoined him he said to Craig: "What will we do to this fellow, now that we've got him in our power?"

"Take him into the cellar and let him go up with the building."

"I'm willin'. It will serve him right for queerin' us as he has done. But for him me and the boys would be a thousand dollars in pocket, and nary a soul be the wiser of how we earned it. Now, Jim and Jude are in jail, and all we've got to look for is revenge."

"There is something more than revenge, McCue. You will get your thousand if the others don't. The men who are backing me will have to ante up when the time comes, or I'd squeal on them, and that would spell ruin for them."

"But how am I goin' to get my share when we'll have to slip out of town the moment we've set the factory afire?"

"There'll be enough money sent on to me for me to square with you and have a good wad over. Then we can part company, each going his own way."

"That suits me," replied McCue.

While they were speaking they were crossing the yard toward the engine house, where there was a side door that afforded entrance to the employees of the factory. Bob was recovering his senses, and he heard every word they said. As a matter of prudence he gave no indication that he had recovered from the effects of the cowardly blow he had received, for he was fast in Craig's grip and could not help himself with any hope of success. McCue had a key for the door, which he had no doubt obtained for a purpose before his discharge, and he opened up and they passed into the building with their prisoner.

"If we could only break into the office safe now," said the rascal, "we could hook all the ready cash on hand."

"Don't talk nonsense," replied Craig, impatiently. "We couldn't open the safe to save our lives. There's probably not much money in it, anyway, as it was always my custom to deposit all of the receipts but the petty cash in the bank

every afternoon, and the new cashier no doubt follows the same plan."

"Well, follow me. This is the way to the cellar. The sooner we get the work over the better."

The cellar was soon reached, and Craig laid Bob down. Flashing a match, he looked at the boy. Bob continued to simulate insensibility, and the ex-cashier was deceived.

"He's good for an hour or more," he said. "And long before that he'll be burned to a crisp."

"We'd better tie him to one of these posts to make sure of him," said McCue.

"It isn't necessary. If his body was found tied it would look like a murder, and if we were caught, and the firing of this building brought home to us, we'd be up against the hangman, and and I'm not anxious to take that risk."

Neither was McCue, and Craig's argument silenced him. They proceeded to gather materials, in which the cellar abounded, to start bonfires in different parts of the place. The factory was a large wooden structure, the floor beams of which rested on the stone walls of the cellar. Two or three good fires started down there would soon communicate with the floor above, and by the time the blaze came to be noticed from the outside, and the alarm brought the fire department to the spot, the interior of the building would be a glowing mass of fire. That's the way the two rascals figured it out, and there was good ground for their belief. They worked under the light of a gas-jet turned low, and took occasional glances at Bob, who was considering how he could defeat their project and at the same time get away himself. He wondered what Billy would do when he didn't find him at the gate. No doubt he would wait a reasonable time and then go on a hunt for him and the watchman. Bob knew that Brown had been knocked out, and if Billy found his senseless body he would suspect foul play at once and do something. Just what Billy would do in such an emergency he couldn't say. They worked steadily at their dastardly employment, and in twenty minutes had collected three big piles of inflammable material such as they calculated would answer their purpose. All being ready to apply a light, McCue rolled up an old newspaper in the form of a torch and approached the gasjet. He stood with his back to Bob, and the boy realized that the moment had come when he must act, and act with lightning quickness. The butt of a revolver protruded from McCue's pocket and Bob's eye caught sight of it. Springing to his feet as lightly as a cat, he darted at the rascal, seized and possessed himself of the weapon, and then grasping it by the barrel, struck the ruffian a terrible blow on the forehead as he turned around. McCue went down like a stricken ox in the shambles, and never moved a muscle afterward, while the ignited torch slowly burned toward his hand. Craig heard the crash of his companion's fall, turned around and faced Bob. For a moment he stood petrified with surprise and consternation, then, not noticing the weapon in the boy's hand, he sprang at him with a terrible imprecation. To save himself, Bob raised the revolver and fired. Craig fell forward on his face and lay quite still.

CHAPTER XIV.—Conclusion.

"I hope I haven't killed him," muttered Bob, with a thrill. "I had to shoot, for in another moment he'd have been on me."

He turned the ex-cashier over. His face was bathed in blood, flowing from an ugly wound across the scalp. Bob examined the course of the bullet and was satisfied that the wound was hardly a dangerous one, though Craig might not recover consciousness for hours.

"They're both in my power now, and I've saved the factory," he breathed, with a feeling of great satisfaction. "Now to notify the police, or perhaps it would be better for me to telephone Mr. Waters first and ask for instructions."

He decided to do the latter, and leaving things as they were, he rushed upstairs and made his way to the office. He got connection with Mr. Waters after some delay, for it was now after midnight, and he recognized his employer's voice at the other end of the wire inquiring who was there.

"It is I, Bob Barron."

Mr. Waters uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"What's the matter, Bob?"

"An attempt has been made to fire the factory by Craig and McCue. I spoiled their game. I am now at the office. You had better dress and come down right away. I suppose I'd better notify the police. Or shall I wait for you?"

"Wait for me. I'll come down right away."

Bob hung up the receiver and then returned to the cellar to take a look at the two rascals. He knew it would be some little time before Mr. Waters could reach the office. McCue and Craig lay where they had fallen. There was a lump over the former's eye as big almost as a hen's egg.

"I must have hit him a terrible blow," thought Bob. "I meant business when I struck at him, for my only hope lay in doing him up at the first crack. Well, he deserves all he got, and I hope he'll get all that's coming to him, and the same applies to Craig, whose proper home is in the State prison. By the way, I wonder what Billy is doing? I forgot all about him."

Bob left the cellar and went into the yard. There was no sign of Billy anywhere. Bob called to him, without result. Then he looked about for the watchman. He found him stretched out unconscious near a pile of lumber. At that moment he heard a noise in the alley. Then a figure, followed by others, came scrambling over the fence. They came toward him and he saw three policemen, headed by Billy.

"That you, Billy?" he said.

"Why, hello, Bob, where the dickens have you been?" ejaculated Billy, in surprise.

"In the soup—almost."

"What do you mean?"

"Wait till we see if Brown can be brought to his senses, then I'll explain all."

The policemen carried the night watchman over to a pump and put his head under it, while one of them poured some brandy down his throat. This treatment presently resulted in the man's return to consciousness. Brown could not tell

what had knocked him out, but Bob was able to furnish that information. He further stated all the facts connected with the attempt to burn the building that the reader is already acquainted with. Then he led all hands to the cellar and showed them the wounded and senseless rascals, and the three piles of broken wood, and paper, and excelsior that would have made a fine beginning for a conflagration had they once been ignited. One of the policemen went upstairs to the office, communicated with the station by telephone, and asked that a patrol wagon be sent to the factory at once. Before the wagon got there Mr. Waters arrived, and he was not a little startled at the sight which the cellar presented. After Bob had repeated his story to him, including the adventure he and Billy had met with at Beckley's saloon, the manufacturer seized his young shipping clerk by the hand and thanked him warmly.

"You have saved the factory this night by your pluck, Bob," he said, "just as you saved it from being blown up last week by your nerve in venturing out to that old house in order to discover what game Craig and my three employees were up to. You are certainly an uncommon boy, and you are making a great record for yourself."

The patrol wagon now came up and the unconscious prisoners were carried away to the station house, where they were revived and locked up in cells. Bob, Billy and Mr. Waters then returned to their homes. Bob had hardly gotten into bed before there was a loud ring at the front door bell. He slipped on his trousers and went down to see who the late caller was, for it was now half-past one in the morning. He found it was a bright young reporter from the "Millgate Journal" who, having picked up such facts of the attempted firing of the Waters factory as appeared on the police blotter, had called to get a fuller story from Bob himself. The boy obligingly narrated all the particulars of the case, and also told him about what had occurred at Beckley's saloon before and after the detective and the policeman arrived. Next morning the "Journal" had a graphic story of the night's events skillfully written up by the young reporter, who gave Bob full credit for saving the factory, and complimented him on his remarkable pluck. Of course this story was read by all the employees of the canning establishment before they reached the factory, and Bob found himself quite a hero that day.

Bob was the chief witness at the examination of the four prisoners in the police court, and though all naturally pleaded not guilty, the evidence against them was easily sufficient to cause the magistrate to hold them—Craig and McCue as principals and Orchard and Starbeam as accomplices. Mr. Waters figured up that Bob had saved not only his building, but his business, which would have been badly disrupted had the establishment been destroyed. As this was the second time the boy had rendered so signal a service to him, and as he had almost lost his life in defense of his employer's interests, the manufacturer determined to reward him handsomely. So he called Bob into his office, and after thanking him again for what he had done, presented him with a check for \$5,000.

The amount nearly took the young shipping clerk's breath away. It looked like a small fortune to him, as indeed it was. Mr. Waters also assured him that he regarded him as one of his most valued employees, and would take care to advance him in the business as fast as possible.

Before the trial of the conspirators came on, both Orchard and Starbeam made a clean confession of the whole business, and they were accepted as witnesses by the prosecution, under an agreement that they were to be sent to jail for a nominal time.

Craig and McCue were easily convicted and received the full penalty for their offenses, which was twenty years' imprisonment at hard labor in the penitentiary.

Although the striking employees of the canning houses eventually had to give up the fight, and as many of them went back to work as the proprietors could employ, for under no circumstances would the bosses discharge the new hands, the rival establishments lost a great deal of trade, and money as well, before they got into full running shape again. During the continuance of the strike Mr. Waters had to work his people nearly every night, and he got so much new trade, which he was able to hold on to, that he put up an addition to the factory, and hired most of the late strikers at a five per cent. advance leaving the others out in the cold.

Bob moved into an enlarged shipping and packing department, with two additional assistants, and his pay was raised to \$20 a week.

Subsequently he was made assistant to the managing clerk, while Billy was promoted to the post of shipping clerk. The demands of his increasing business compelled Mr. Waters to create the position of general superintendent of the manufacturing end of the concern, and Bob got the job at \$30 per week. By this time he was Jessie Wiseman's most devoted admirer and steady company, and though they were not actually engaged, it looked as if they would make a match of it. At any rate, her parents looked on him as a remarkably good catch, for he was not only making good money, and saving a large part of his earnings for the future, but there appeared to be some probability that he would get an interest in the business after a time, for Mr. Waters had come to look upon him as his right-hand man—a boy who was making a splendid record for himself.

Next week's issue will contain "A FIGHT FOR MONEY; or, FROM SCHOOL TO WALL STREET."

It was a well-dressed young man, with a sad, far-away look in his eyes, that stood on the steps as the lady opened the door. "Excuse me, madam," he said, as he lifted his hat, "but could you direct me to the Home for the Friendless?" "Do you mean to say that you are seeking it as a refuge?" she asked, in surprise. "I am, madam," he replied. "I am a baseball umpire."

BUCKSKIN BILL, THE COWBOY PRINCE

Or,

The Rough Riders of the Ranch

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER X.

Caught By The Flood.

A yell of alarm escaped the bandits, and they were seized with a sudden panic.

It was remarkable how fast they disappeared.

Buckskin Bill was calm and cool despite the excitement raging around him, and glanced back over his shoulder.

Colonel Briggs and Denver Jack were behind him, closely followed by all of the rough-riders who were unhurt.

"Hey, Jack!"

"Well, Bill?"

"See to the wounded."

"I will."

"Colonel Briggs, follow me with the men."

"Dash ahead!" roared the old rancher. "We've got them on the run now, sir, and you can soon reach the canyon if you don't stop an instant."

"Whoop! Hurrah!" yelled the cowboys, and amid the reports of their rifles as they shot at the fleeing gang ahead they charged after Bill and the colonel into the canyon.

Rattlesnake Valley was before them.

It opened out into a big basin, through which flowed a stream, and ahead were a number of houses and a big smelter and ore-crusher belonging to the mine.

The outlaws were running for the building, with the evident intention of making a stand there.

Indeed, it was not five minutes later before they all vanished among the buildings, and Bill drew rein and waited for the others to come up.

"Colonel," he remarked, when Briggs reached his side, "we've gained the valley, all right, but those dogs have taken refuge in the buildings, and we may have a tough contract on our hands to drive them out."

"By thunder, we'll do it, though, if we're given time," declared the old ranchman. "Here comes Jack."

Bill's head cowboy now came dashing up and reined in.

"Well?" queried the boy, in anxious tones.

Four of the colonel's men and one of ours wounded."

"Dangerously?"

"No, slightly. They're in ther saddle agin an' ready fer business."

"Good enough! I feared for their lives."

"Here they come now."

In a few minutes all the rough-riders reached Bill, and while their injuries were being attended

to the boy sent a couple back to hold the entrance of the canyon.

"Don't let any of Flood's men sneak out," was Bill's order.

The colonel and Jack now began to consult with the boy to devise a means of driving the outlaws from the houses.

This was a pretty hard job.

Finally, however, the colonel remarked:

"I've got a plan. It's a desperate one, too. We can smoke them out by burning down the buildings. I don't mind the loss of the property a bit."

"Then we'd better wait till nightfall so we can act without our movements being seen," said Bill.

The rest assented to this plan, and a watch upon the houses was kept up by some while the rest made themselves comfortable.

As the shadows of twilight fell upon the valley, Bill strolled over to the little office building of the mine, where the colonel was standing, and asked him:

"Have you seen anything of them yet?"

"Not a sign," growled the old man, in gruff tones, "and I wouldn't be surprised if they've gone down the shaft, as there isn't a light in any of the huts, and their silence is very suspicious. I only wish I knew."

"Why?"

"Because I'd flood the mine by deflecting the stream into it through that sluice over by the sand hill."

"How many men did you have working here?"

"Twenty-eight, including the foreman."

"And you don't know whether they are dead or alive?"

"How can I tell? Flood's men may have shot every one of them, or again, they may merely be held prisoners either in one of the buildings or in the mine."

"In that case we are baffled."

"How do you mean, Buckskin Bill?"

"Just this way," replied the boy. "If your men are in the huts we'd burn them up if we set fire to the buildings. On the other hand, we'd drown them if they are in the mine."

The colonel started, and an anxious look swept over his face.

He reflected a few moments and finally remarked:

"That's right."

"Then before we attempt to do anything we had better try to locate the men if they are still on earth."

"Can't be done," declared the colonel. "It's as much as any man's life is worth to approach those huts."

"Well, I'm going to risk it, and I'll look to you to tell all our men, so they won't plug me with a bullet while under the impression that I'm one of Flood's gang."

"You've got nerve, boy, and hang me if I don't admire it. Go ahead. I'll tell our men. Look out that they don't wing you, though, for I'll bet every scoundrel in the place is on the lookout for some one to come at them. How are you going to work it?"

"Indian fashion."

"I don't understand."

"Then I'll show you," and Bill took out his bowie and, going over to a clump of bushes, he cut them down.

With a piece of old rope he found the boy tied them in a big bundle and, crouching behind it, slowly pushed it ahead of him.

A grim smile crossed the colonel's face, and he hastened away to tell the cowboys what Bill's plan was, and to warn them not to fire at him.

The boy was going ahead toward the huts, pushing the bush in advance at such a slow rate that its approach would scarcely be noticed.

To any one in the huts it must have looked, in the gloom, the same as dozens of other bushes growing around.

It took Bill half an hour to reach the nearest hut, and he glided inside and found the room empty.

"Nothing doing!" was his comment, as he glanced around. "There isn't a soul in the place."

Through a side window he had a good view of the other huts, but no matter how carefully he watched them he failed to see the slightest sign of the gang.

It puzzled the young cattle prince to know how they had managed to disappear so suddenly, until he met with an accident which might have cost him his life.

He was crossing the room in the dark when he stepped into a hole with one foot and shot downward.

The boy plunged through an open trap-door in the floor.

He barely had time to clutch the edge of the opening with his hands to save himself from a bad fall.

There he hung for a few moments, his swaying legs striking against something in the darkness below.

It proved to be a ladder, and he got upon it and lit a match.

Then the mystery of the outlaws' disappearance was explained.

Below was a secret tunnel leading toward the mine, and Bill felt pretty sure that each hut was furnished with one exactly like this, through which the villains had gone.

He got up into the room again, muttering:

"These passages must have been dug to be used as a means of retreat in case the miners who formerly occupied them were attacked and wished to escape."

Going to the door, he boldly walked back to the rough-riders and met them with the colonel.

"I see the huts are empty," remarked Briggs, dryly.

"Do you know about the secret passages under the huts?"

"Of course I do, as it was I who had them made. They lead into the mine, and I presume those villains must have found out about them and used them to escape."

"That's just what they have done."

"Then we are going to have a hard job to dislodge them, sir, unless they have no provisions. In that case we could starve them out."

"Was there any food here for your men?"

"Plenty, and I'll bet they've taken it with them."

"Hark! What was that?"

A dull, heavy crash was heard.

The colonel gave a cry of alarm and peered around the building.

"Look out for yourselves!" he yelled the next moment, "the dam has broken up the stream, and

a flood is coming down the valley. Mount your nags and ride for your lives, unless you want to get drowned."

The men scattered and rushed for their bronchos.

There was a dull roar and a violent hissing sound, and they all saw the white, foamy wall of water rushing toward them from the western side of the valley.

"Colonel!" cried Bill, "how about the men in the mine?"

"If they don't get out by the secret exit they'll be drowned like rats in a trap," was the grim reply.

And then Bill and the colonel dashed away after the men as fast as their mounts could carry them.

Behind them raced the flood.

Tons of water struck the shanties and, tumbling them over, carried them along with the other debris it picked up.

What was worse, the flood was swiftly gaining on the flying band of men, who had now reached the narrow gorge and were racing to get out to the open ground.

The rough-riders might have escaped if one of their number had not caused his horse to stumble.

It blocked the gorge and upset those coming behind, and before they could get up the roaring wall of water struck them.

It gave Jim Flood a terrible shock when Buckskin Bill rescued Jessie, and he rode away with Pancho at his heels, swearing vengeance on the boy.

When at a safe distance and sure they were not being pursued, the villain reined in his sweating mustang to a walk and, suddenly turning upon the Mexican, he shook his fist at him and growled:

"Blast yer for a snearin' prairie dog! Why didn't yer stand up fer me like a man? Yer a cowardly galoot, an' I hev a notion ter put a bullet through yer. D'yer hear me?"

Pancho turned pale at the threat, for he feared the outlaw and had been expecting a severe rebuke for being afraid of Bill.

He dropped his glance and began to tremble. "What could I do, senor?" he pleaded. "If he was too much for you, he certainly was more than a match for me."

"He wuzn't too much ier me, blame yer!" snapped Flood, glaring at his man fiercely. "Don't yer dare ter say as he wuz too much fer me. Didn't I git away with a whole skin?"

"Bueno! But I was covered. It's a wonder I wasn't shot."

"I'm mad!" roared Jim. "I'm mad 'cause I wuz fool enough ter let a little kid git ther best of me. An' wot's wuss, he saved ther gal. D'ye hear me? I'll lay that feller out yet if it's ther last thing I does. Now ther gang kin crow over me."

"No, they can't, senor. No one knows where you went but me, and I'm sure I shall never tell."

"See thet yer don't!" snarled the villain, for it was at least some satisfaction to know that nobody could laugh at his defeat among the gang.

"Which way now, senor?" demanded the Mexican uneasily.

(To be continued)

GOOD READING

BIBLE LAND OF OPHIR IN PERU.

Ophir, reported in the Bible as the country of gold mines from which King Solomon's Phœnician sailors brought gold to Palestine, was located in Peru, says Dr. van Hauch, an Austrian explorer.

Dr. von Hauch declares he met in the primeval forests of Peru in the Pampas del Sacremendo, 300 members of an Indian tribe of pronounced Jewish appearance, speaking a language similar to Hebrew. The name Solomon is the most common name among the members of the tribe.

There is a legend current among the tribe, says the explorer, of a Land of Gold known as Ophira, situated on the River Hualla, to which, so the legend says, white men came many years ago and carried off large quantities of gold.

NEW WATER LOOSED MAY PAY SANTA BARBARA QUAKE LOSS

If the great increase in water flow which has followed the earthquake throughout the country continues and becomes the normal water supply of the district, Santa Barbara and its surroundings may expect from this source alone a benefit that will pay the earthquake loss many times over in years to come, according to estimates of ranchers.

Several geologists assert that the shocks probably opened the subterranean water flow of the valleys and other underground water reservoirs that never before have been available to this district.

Virtually all streams in the earthquake zone show a marked increase in flow since the shake-up.

NEW CAR ASSEMBLED IN 36 MINUTES

From Poland recently came word of an astonishing sort of automobile, according to *Popular Science*. It is the invention of an engineer named Kernowski, and he calls it the "Polonia," after his native land. It is designed to bring about the utmost simplicity and speed in making repairs and replacements of parts.

In a recent public test two machinists and a helper took down the motor, gear set, universal and rear axle in fourteen minutes, and had the car completely reassembled in thirty-six minutes additional. The car has a six-cylinder motor, develops forty-five horse power and is said to be capable of a speed of more than a mile a minute.

SCOFFS AT SNAKE BITES

A. Radclyffe Dugmore, who has a large experience with wild life in Africa, Canada, Newfoundland, Florida and elsewhere, scoffs at the idea of danger from snake bites. "Snakes! How many authentic cases of deaths from snake bites do we hear of?" he asks. "As compared with the deaths from trolleys or from fire they are as one is to a million, yet people walk boldly in front of a trolly and light fires daily with no idea of the awful risk they must surely be running. But to camp in Florida, the land of snakes, No!

never. I have spent many months camping in this terribly dangerous country, sometimes with and sometimes without a tent, sleeping in all sorts of places, shooting in swamps and in the pine lands, and two rattlesnakes only have I seen (both inside a city limit)." No doubt a majority of the 1,600 species of snakes are harmless, yet Sir J. Fryrer has demonstrated that in India alone some 20,000 persons are killed annually by venomous snakes.

SAVED FROM SHARKS

How seven sailors, who had been without food and water for three days on a sinking barkentine, were rescued just as they were about to fall prey to a school of sharks, was told by Captain Blackadder, of the steamship *Manzanillo*, which arrived recently from Havana. On March 17, on the way to Havana, the *Manzanillo* ran into the end of a hurricane. In the distance what looked like a derelict was sighted. Through a glass, however, the figures of seven men were made out. Captain Blackadder headed for the wreck. It was still so rough when the *Manzanillo* got within hailing distance that it seemed impossible to lower a lifeboat. "Jump overboard and we will save you!" shouted Captain Blackadder. The men pointed to the water. For the first time those on the *Manzanillo* saw the great school of maneating sharks following the wreck. Two attempts were made to get a lifeboat out, but the sea was too rough. The wreck was sinking. Three hours after the *Manzanillo* had first sighted it its decks were nearly under water. The sharks, growing bolder, began leaping toward the men lashed to the mast stubs. Captain Blackadder realized that the wreck would go down in a few minutes, and called for volunteers to man a lifeboat. Five men responded, and after a hard fight, reached the wreck and took the seven survivors aboard. Five minutes later the wreck sank. One man was found with the shattered bone of his left leg sticking through the flesh. He had fallen from the topsail yard just before the hurricane carried away the masts. The rescued men were from the brigantine *Mary Burke*, which sailed from Pensacola loaded with mahogany. They had drifted helplessly for three days after the masts snapped, and had lashed themselves to the butts of the masts after the hold began to fill with water. Four of the men were taken to a hospital in Havana, where one of them was expected to die.

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

HAREM NEWS

The members of the harem are still young slaves bought in Circassia, Georgia, Armenia, and other places, and practically educated in the harem itself on the chance that the Sultan may one day notice them, writes a Constantinople correspondent of a London paper. It appears also that civilization has not made great strides in the management of the royal harem, and that corporal punishments are still frequent, eunuchs, called "beating eunuchs," still being kept for refractory persons. Poisoned coffee is also not entirely out of fashion, while, grimmer still, the terrible sack flung into the Bosphorus even now does its sinister work. It is piteous to learn that, notwithstanding all this, many persons willingly sell children to supply the enormous colony which constitutes the harem.

AN OLD INDIAN GRAVEYARD

The only Indian graveyard in the world where civilization and barbarism lie side by side in apparent friendliness is found in the Pacific Northwest. In this common burial ground are to be seen the graves of good chiefs, braves and squaws who were converted to the Christian faith. Their graves are of conventional form and are decorated with crosses and tombstones. On the other side repose the unbaptized—the Indians who died unconverted. They were laid to rest on top of the ground and were dressed in full regalia, with war bonnet and paint.

This unique happy hunting-ground is one of the most interesting sights for tourists, and it never fails to call forth a query as to the hereafter of these red-skinned brothers, the believers and unbelievers, who have lain there so long. The cemetery is not large, but it shows that a goodly number of the dead had come under the influence of the missionaries before they passed away.

SEMI-SAVAGE CHILEANS.

Coronel is the principal coaling port on the west coast of South America, and there it is customary for freighters to ship twenty or thirty stevedores in addition to the regular crew to break out

the cargo when it is consigned to various ports further up the coast.

These men are mostly Chileans, and a tougher-looking company than these seagoing longshoremen could not be found, even among the bandits of Southern Europe and Asia or the old-time pirates of the West Indies.

Swarthy, undersized, dirty and clothed in rags, they seem to touch the bottom notch in the scale of humanity. What they lack in intelligence is apparently made up in animal cunning and ferocity. Even a crew of Kanakas refuse to berth or mess with them. Every one carries a knife, which he can throw with the speed and accuracy of a bullet.

They are commanded by an overseer, who is addressed as Captain and who exerts a certain degree of authority over them. They do their own cooking aboard ship, each man serving as cook for a week, at the end of which he resigns in favor of the next in line. Of course to menial labor, not even to work the cargo.

LAUGHS

"Oh, lovey, what do you think? Baby's got a tooth." "Well, he cried long enough for it."

Teacher—What is a volcano? Answer—A mountain that pours out smoke, ashes and saliva.

"What is a triple alliance, Tommy?" "It's when pa an' ma an' the school-teacher is coming to-day, so you'll have to stay in and play."

"You got pretty well tanned while you were at the seashore, didn't you, Willie," said the visitor. "That's nothing," retorted Willie. "I get tanned most every day while I'm home, too."

First Passenger—I say, whatever are you putting on a thing like that for?—why, it's a woman's nightgown! Second Passenger—In case of accident, my boy—"Women and children first!"

A young lady in Chicago, whose feet are a little too large to suit her ideas of beauty, wrote to a local paper and bluntly asked: "What is good for big feet?" The wise editor promptly answered: "Big shoes."

A lady had been looking for a friend for a long time without success. Finally she came upon her in an unexpected way. "Well," she exclaimed, "I've been on a perfect wild-goose chase all day long but, thank goodness, I've found you at last."

"De Lawd loveth a churful giver!" solemnly said Parson Bagster, after the collection had been taken up. "But"—the good old man darted a glance at the well-nigh empty plate—"I dunno whuh He finds any of 'em!"

"Whisky is a deadly poison," began the prohibition orator. "You can't get me to believe that," said one of his hearers. "My rich uncle has been drinking it for fifty years, and I don't believe the old cuss is ever going to die."

POINTS OF INTEREST

"TRAVELING" STONES

"Traveling stones," from the size of a pea to six inches in diameter, are found in Nevada. When disturbed on a flood or other level surface, within two or three feet of one another, they immediately begin to travel toward a common center, and there lie huddled like a cluster of eggs in a nest. A single stone removed to a distance of three and a half feet, upon being released, at once started with wonderful and somewhat comical celerity to join its fellows. These queer stones are found in a region that is comparatively level and little more than bare rock. Scattered over this barren region are little basins, from a few feet to a rod or two in diameter, and it is in the bottom of these that the rolling stones are found. The cause for the strange conduct of these stones is doubtless to be found in the material of which they are composed, which appears to be lodestone or magnetic iron ore.

WILD BOAR HUNTING

Around the old Norman capital there are five great forest tracts. They contain game of various sorts, deer, and sometimes one hears rumors of bears, but whether this be true or not there are certainly some wild boars in the forest of Louviers. A boar-hunt is one of the prettiest, most picturesque sights in France, with its quaint dresses, its weird music, its remnants of Old World ceremonial. The cries of "vocelet" and "viaut," continuously heard during the hunt, are corruptions of "voilà ce l'est," "le voilà lahaut."

The servants are called by different names, bearing some reference to the sport, and they are all gorgeously dressed, especially the hornblower. The music of the horn plays an important part, for the different strains indicate what the hunted beast is doing. Whether he has taken to the open, whether he has gone to the water, when he is at bay, all is shown by the horns. The "halali tenante" is played when he tosses some of the hounds and runs off again; the second half of the "halali" shows that the boar is slain, and if he is a "solitaire," a huge fellow who lives alone, his death is honored with the "royale fanfare."

Sometimes, when the beast attacks the hounds, the gentlemen dismount and prick him with their spears, to create a diversion. Then he will leave the dogs and rush at the hunters, and there is a general "sauve qui peut," for it is no joke to be wounded by the tusks of a wild boar.

WOODEN CANNONS

Any one familiar with the construction of modern weapons of warfare and the high explosives used in them would naturally suppose a cannon made of wood would be of little or no value as a weapon. Wooden cannons have been used with considerable success, nevertheless, in recent revolutions in Cuba, in Haiti and in the Dominican Republic. The wood used in the construction of these crude weapons is a very tough variety, having a twisted grain that twines about the log in such a way that to split the timber with the ordinary means is almost impossible. The best trees are selected, and a piece of the log five or

six feet in length and about one foot in diameter is cut. After the bark has been removed and the log made perfectly round, it is swung up on a crude truss, and a hole is burned into it from one end. The log is wound with strips of rawhide cut from the skin of a steer. When the cannon is covered with the strips of hide, another layer is wound on, and this is continued until the weapon has increased several inches in diameter.

After the log is covered and the bore is finished the weapon is treated to a hot draught, which tends to contract the hide binding, which becomes almost as strong as wire.

These crude cannon have been used with success in a number of instances, and it is astonishing the number of times they may be fired before they burst or become otherwise disabled.

PHILIPPINES PRODUCE MOST BEESWAX.

One of the old mysteries of the Oregon coast has been solved by Thomas Hesperian Rogers, of McMinnville—at least Mr. Rogers has solved the Nehalem, Ore., beeswax mystery to his own satisfaction, says "The Portland Oregonian" in a recent issue. "It is genuine beeswax," said Mr. Rogers, who was in Portland for the reunion of pioneers. "I have written letters and read books and gathered information until I know something about the Nehalem wax. There is enough honey in the Island of Luzon to feed the people. There is more beeswax in the Philippines than in any other country in the world. Years ago beeswax was so common that it was used as fuel.

"Along about 1776 a Spanish ship sailed from the Philippines with beeswax candles to supply the Franciscan missions along the California coast. The wax was prepared for shipment by Chinese, although the trade was not handled by them. There were 20,000 Chinese in the Philippines at the time and they made the wax into tapers, into immense candles, into slabs and blocks, all of which have been dug from the sands of Nehalem, near the mouth of the bay. The ship was wrecked and the cargo of beeswax was scattered along the beach, in the course of years, for many miles.

In addition to stamping insignia of the church on some of the wax, the Chinese manufacturers also, at times, stamped a dragon, this being, probably, the trademark of the Chinese factory. Much beeswax was also shipped from the Philippines to China for worshipping Joss. There isn't the slightest doubt that the Nehalem wax is beeswax. It smells like it, and stands every test that beeswax does. What has caused doubt is the large quantity, and this led many to suppose that there couldn't possibly be a shipload of beeswax. Why, in the office of the Tillamook Headlight, a couple of years ago, there was a candle whose base was eight inches in diameter. Candles of similar dimensions are to be found in places of worship in Jerusalem. One thing confirms another. There have been Spanish doubloons found in the Nehalem sands and old Nehalem Jim, an Indian, wore one around his neck on a string."

FROM ALL POINTS

SCARCITY OF ANIMALS IN JAPAN

Domestic animals are very scarce in Japan. Cows are unknown in that country; there are but few horses, and these are imported mainly for the use of foreigners. The carts used for the conveyance of merchandise in the city streets are pulled and pushed by coolies, and the pleasure carriages are drawn by men. Dogs are not often seen; there are no sheep, and wool is not used in clothing, silk and cotton being the staples. There are no pigs—pork is an unknown article of diet—there are no goats, or mules, or donkeys. Wild animals there are, however, and, in particular, bears of enormous size.

DANGER IN EUROPEAN COAL MINES

In view of the recent frightful accident from an explosion of gas in the coal mines, it is interesting to learn what progress has been made during the last twenty-five years in securing the lives of men employed in coal mines against dangers from such explosions. The authorities have so improved the appliances needed in coal mining and have adopted so many precautionary measures to protect the lives of miners that, while, on the average, 571 miners of every 1,000,000 annually lost their lives during the decade 1881-1890, this record has been steadily reduced until, in 1905, only 29 perished from the explosion by fire damp. This shows what intelligent, systematic and persistent effort can and does accomplish in saving human lives from danger and accident.

A MARINE WONDER

One of the largest and most astonishing marine wonders seen for some time has recently been brought to light from ocean depths. This is a remarkable specimen of a giant sunfish. This huge monster measures ten and a half feet from tip to tip of his fins and is nine feet long; it weighs nearly 2,000 pounds. The great fish was captured in the Pacific Ocean off the California coast, and the skin has been mounted in New York for museum exhibition. Such huge monsters are rare, however, though some weighing from 500 to 800 pounds have been obtained occasionally. They are to be seen in tropical and temperate seas, both in American and other countries. While inhabiting the open sea, at great depths, they are frequently to be seen off the California and Florida coasts. The skin has a brilliant silvery appearance and at night is said to be highly phosphorescent. The flesh, however, is not used for food. The big fish has a comparative small mouth, and to provide for the enormous stomach consumes thousands of small fish and various other marine creatures. The great fins are three feet long, and when swimming the upper one protrudes high out of the water. From certain ridges and folds developed on the body it is thought the monster is about fifty years old. One of the striking features, next to the colossal size, is the peculiar shape of the body, which looks as if the hind portion had been bitten off by some other formidable ocean inhabitant and left only a fringe of a tail.

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WILD DOGS IN THE NORTH.

In the Lake of the Woods country, which may be described as a wilderness of forest, rock and brushwood, a race of wild dogs have established themselves and are increasing in numbers so rapidly that fears are entertained that the animals will yet become troublesome. When the Canadian Pacific Railway was under construction, the camps of the workmen had of course to be frequently moved, and the dogs were often left behind, and eventually, like wolves and foxes, found means of sustaining themselves. The animals are large, short-haired and generally red or red and white in color. They are exceedingly wild and will fly on the first approach of man. In winter they live by catching rabbits that abound in the wilderness of brushwood; in summer the wild dogs catch fish that crowd the smaller streams that connect inland lakes. The Indians detest the wild dogs, as they pursue game and take the bait from the traps. Sometimes a wild dog is taken in a trap that has been set for other animals. They are exceedingly cunning, as a rule though.



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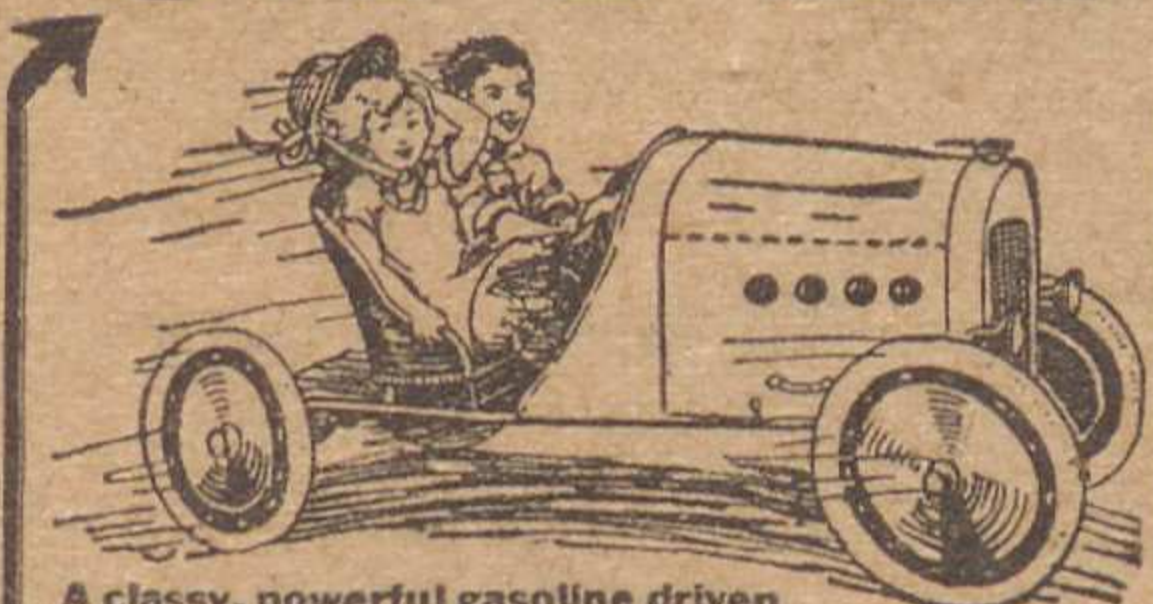
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